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STAR TREK INSURRECTION

CARRIE II
VIRUS
FROST
PSYCHO

THE FACULTY
MIGHTY JOE YOUNG
PRINCE OF EGYPT

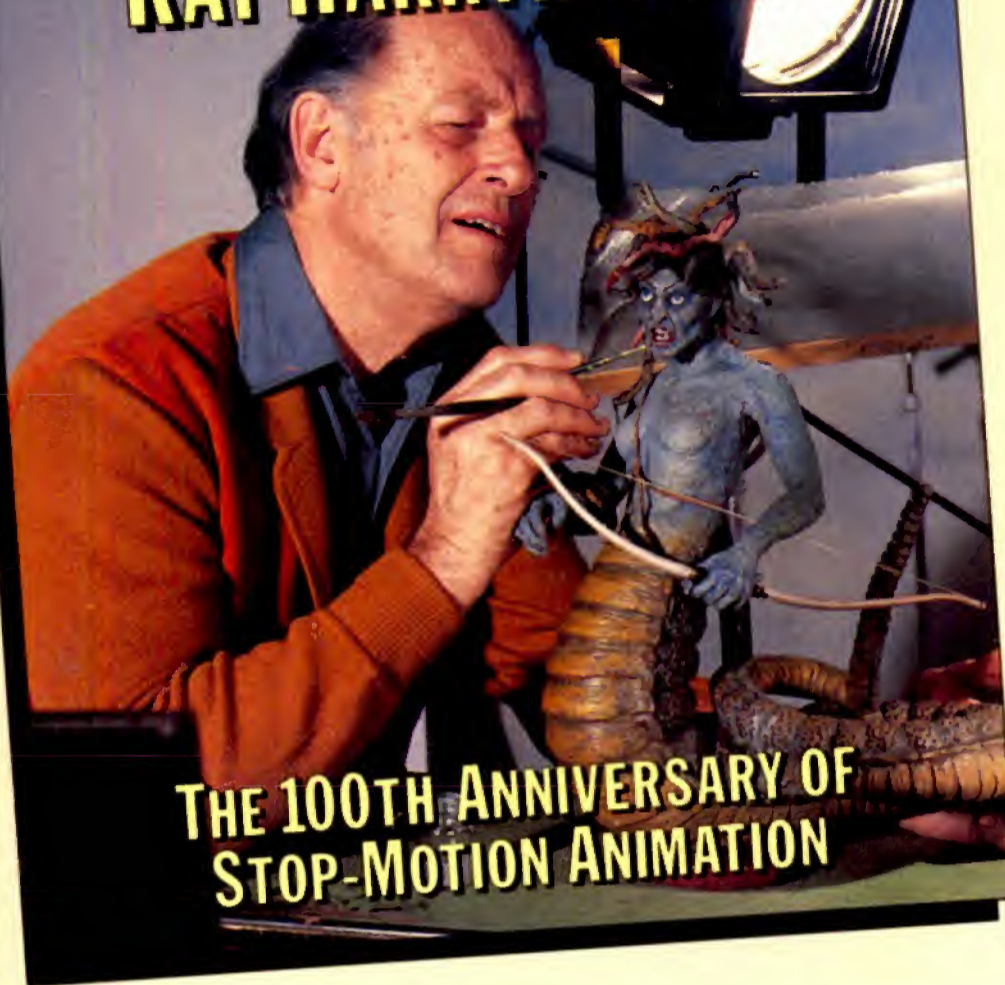
Volume 30 Number 12



MAKING PIXAR'S "A BUG'S LIFE," ANIMATING CGI

CINEFANTASTIQUE

RAY HARRYHAUSEN



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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

JANUARY 1999

Will STAR TREK: INSURRECTION break the STAR TREK curse? For the uninitiated, the curse has been said to haunt all odd-numbered TREK films, since 1979's STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, though that one for my money was among the best of the series, and certainly better than some of the even numbered "hits." INSURRECTION is the ninth TREK feature, and fans over the years have noticed that the odd numbered films have consistently failed to live-up to expectations: III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK, marked Leonard Nimoy's directing debut but suffered from his lack of on-screen presence; V: THE FINAL FRONTIER marked William Shatner's directing debut, and is certainly the worst of the series; and VII: GENERATIONS proved an uneasy blending of the classic and Next Generation casts.

Resident TREK expert Anna Kaplan went behind-the-scenes of STAR TREK:INSURRECTION to report from the set for this issue's cover story, and found most of the TREK regulars scoffing at the notion of a curse—though all seemed well aware of it. Certainly no curse was evident to Kaplan in the exuberance of the filmmakers and the good-natured camaraderie observed on the set. Kaplan interviewed regulars Patrick Stewart, doubling as the film's co-executive producer, Brent Spiner and Jonathan Frakes, who repeats as director on the heels of his success with STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT. Kaplan also interviews the movie's stellar guest cast, including Anthony Zerbe, Oscar-winner F. Murray Abraham, and Broadway-trained Donna Murphy, who plays Picard's love interest, and found them all to be swept-up in the TREK experience and the rewards of working on director Frakes' "happy" set." Kaplan also profiles the work of the behind-the-camera creators by interviewing screenwriter Michael Piller, production designer Herman Zimmerman, and makeup designer Michael Westmore, and finds that INSURRECTION is in many ways a departure for the movie series. Whether it's cursed, or not, we'll all discover on December 11.

Frederick S. Clarke



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DEAD CALM IN SPACE

SUPERNOVA (UA)

After executive producing such genre franchises as ALIEN and the TALES FROM THE CRYPT, Walter Hill (STREETS OF FIRE) finally directs a science-fiction horror film. James Spader (STARGATE) stars in the outer-space thriller about a deep space medical vessel, the Nightingale 229, that answers a distress signal from a comet mining operation. The plot (which began life as an extraterrestrial rip-off of DEAD CALM) follows the rescue team as they are threatened by a mysterious passenger—the lone survivor of the mining operation—who is mutating into a dangerous alien being.

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is actually a better time for an adult movie." The story follows a woman (Annette Bening) whose dreams are plagued by a psychic link to the mind of a crazed killer, who comes looking for her.

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG (BV) December 18

Bill Paxton (ALIENS) and Charlize Theron (THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE) star for director Ron Underwood (TREMORS) in this remake of the RKO classic—about a zoologist who discovers an awesome 15-foot gorilla, fearsome and dangerous when provoked, but tame in the hands beautiful young woman who raised him. SEE PAGE 34.

PSYCHO (Universal) Now Playing

Gus Van Zant's color-by-the-numbers version of the Alfred Hitchcock classic opened on December 4. Vince Vaughn fills in for the late Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates, and Anne Heche and Jullianne Moore fill out the other familiar roles in what amounts to a virtual recreation of the original. SEE PAGE 40.

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (DreamWorks) December 18

DreamWorks' epic animated drama retells the story of Exodus like a Warner Bros gangster movie, in which two boyhood friends (in this case Moses and the Pharaoh Rameses) find themselves on a collision course as adults. Val Kilmer and Ralph Fiennes provide the lead voices, along with Sandra Bullock, Danny Glover, Jeff Goldblum, Steve Martin, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Patrick Stewart. SEE PAGE 7.

STAR TREK: INSURRECTION (Paramount) Now playing

The Next Generation climbs aboard the Enterprise for another big-screen adventure. The story pits Picard against the the Federation, when the later decides to ignore its own Prime Directive in regards to the development of a valuable planet. SEE PAGE 16.

VIRUS (Universal) January 15

Universal has been keeping this VIRUS under containment, apparently afraid that it might be washed away by H2O (the studio had planned an August 14 release, until Miramax decided to release the latest HALLOWEEN sequel—also starring Jamie Lee Curtis—on August 7. SEE PAGE 10.

THE WIZARD OF OZ (MGM) December 25

As part of their 75th Anniversary celebration, Warner Bros. dusts off this TV perennial and puts it back on the big screen where it belongs. (Thank god they opted for a re-release rather than a remake—are you listening, Universal?) Sure, you've seen it before, but don't let that dissuade you from enjoying the full theatrical experience. Produced by Mervyn Leroy; directed by Victor Fleming; adapted by Noel Langley, from the book by L. Frank Baum.

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (Universal) Now Playing

The sequel to the sleeper hit of 1995 in time for Thanksgiving last month. George Miller (MAD MAX) produced directed, and co-wrote. James Cromwell returns as Farmer Hoggit; Mickey Rooney co-stars.

BABY GENIUSES (Columbia) ??

We know you've been waiting with breathless anticipation ever since the April release date we announced (in CFQ 29:12) failed to materialize. Columbia assures us that the film is still on their schedule of upcoming releases; they just don't have a date penciled in yet. Interpret this delay however you wish. Kathleen Turner, Christopher Lloyd, Kim Cattrall, Peter MacNicol, and Dom DeLuise star for writer-director Bob Clark (BLACK CHRISTMAS) in this tale of "baby geniuses" who know how to converse in a secret language that sounds like gibberish to adults.

CARRIE II (UA) January 15

Despite the title, don't expect to see Sissy Spacek return in this sequel to the teen-terror hit of 1976. Instead, Carrie White's telekinetic powers have been genetically inherited by another member of the family, Rachel (Emily Bergl). Amy Irving reprises her role from the original. Katt Shea directed, from a script by Rafael Moreu. SEE PAGE 8.

THE FACULTY (Dimension) December 25

Robert Rodriguez (FROM DUSK TILL DAWN) directed Elijah Wood and Laura Harris in this Kevin Williamson-scripted SCREAM-fest about body-snatching aliens who infiltrate the faculty of the local school. Bebe Neuwirth and Salma Hayek co-star. SEE PAGE 12.

FROST (WB) December 11

Michael Keaton and Kelly Preston star in this tale of a dead father whose soul comes back to his children in the form of a snowman. At one time titled JACK FROST, the film began development as an adaptation of the song "Frosty the Snowman." SEE PAGE 36.

GODS AND MONSTERS (Lions Gate) Now Playing (limited)

After exclusive debuts in New York and Los Angeles, the release of this excellent film is widening to other major markets (including Chicago on December 4). If you have any interest in classic Universal horror movies or director James Whale—or just in great filmmaking—keep your eyes open for when it comes to a theatre near you. SEE CFQ 30:11

IN DREAMS (DreamWorks) January/February

This psychic thriller from writer-director Neil Jordan (INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE) was originally planned for a November or December release last year, but it was pushed back to the first quarter of 1999 due to underwater filming that took longer than expected. DreamWorks distribution chief Jim Tharp told *Hollywood Reporter*, "It won't be ready in time. But January

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Upcoming cinefantastique at a glance, along with a word or two for the discriminating viewer.

compiled by Jay Stevenson
(unless otherwise noted)



SNUFF

8MM (Columbia)

Taking a break from the BATMAN franchise, Joel Schumacher directs this noirish tale penned by SEVEN-screenwriter Andrew Kevin Walker. Nicholas Cage plays a private eye hired by a widow who has found a sordid 8mm film among her late husband's effects that apparently portrays an actual murder staged specifically for the camera. Cage must track down the source of this "snuff" film to see whether it is in fact the real thing. Expect lots of bogus studio publicity to the effect that this film's premise is based on reality, but snuff films are really just another urban legend, like stolen kidneys and gerbil stuff: no real snuff film has ever surfaced, and every law enforcement agency that ever looked into the matter has concluded that the films don't exist.

February 12

HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC

PSYCHOS AND SISTERS

THE CROW producer Ed Pressman on his upcoming slate of genre films.

by Alan Jones

Producer Ed Pressman is currently on the World Festival circuit promoting Abel Ferrara's *NEW ROSE HOTEL*, based on the short story by Cyberpunk author William Gibson. It was at the Venice Film Festival, where *NEW ROSE HOTEL* met a decidedly mixed reception, that he announced he was producing a remake of one of his earliest successes in the genre, *SISTERS*. Pressman said, "There's obviously been a post-*SCREAM* reaction in Hollywood to the horror film. *SCREAM* regenerated the form commercially, and whenever a film does that well it tends to create a gold rush. That's why we're seeing all these Alfred Hitchcock remakes at the moment like *A PERFECT MURDER*, *REAR WINDOW* [starring Christopher Reeve], and *PSYCHO*. So why not remake a Hitchcock knock-off, which was what *SISTERS* was always being called." *SISTERS* was the 1973 horror effort from Brian De Palma, an in-your-face shocker about reporter Jennifer Salt witnessing a murder and tangling with one of two separated Siamese twins played by Margot Kidder. Plenty of surprises, stylish touches and soon-to-be recognizable trademark De Palma flourishes made *SISTERS* something of a sleeper for AIP. Pressman continued, "I'd been



Ed Pressman (r), with director Abel Ferrara on the set of *NEW ROSE HOTEL* is planning to film *AMERICAN PSYCHO* and remake Brian DePalma's *SISTERS*.

thinking about remaking *SISTERS* for years—way before *SCREAM* was released. It's not as famous as *PSYCHO* and, therefore, not encumbered with too much expectation. It was a drive-in movie at the time, but when I looked at it again I saw how elegantly it was structured and how well it stood up as a piece of horror entertainment. I hired a writer to revise and update it, and we are talking to Roger Avary [who received a co-story credit on *PULP FICTION*] about directing."

Another top-flight project that Pressman has been nurturing is the movie version of Brett Easton Ellis' controversial best seller *AMERICAN PSYCHO*. Originally to be directed by Mary Harron (*I SHOT ANDY WARHOL*) with Christian Bale in the title role, all hell broke loose when *TITANIC* heart-throb du jour Leonardo Di Caprio said he was interested in the lead. As a result, the budget shot up to \$40 million on the Lionsgate production, until Leo pulled out. So *AMERICAN PSYCHO* was officially 'downsized' to the small-scale indie movie it was always envisaged to be, with Mary Harron allowed back on the project to which she had devoted over two years of her life.

Pressman said, "The reason Di Caprio wanted to do it was because of Mary's spectacular script. Because he couldn't give us a definite start date, we had to continue without him. It was always going to be a difficult novel to adapt, and even Ellis himself couldn't do it in a treatment he wrote. What Mary has done is focus on the social satire and made it very witty. I see it now as a contemporary American version of *RIDICULE* [the excellent

continued on next page

The Deep Blue Sea

by Chuck Wagner

The sea lab set of the fictional floating lab Aquatica lies in a massive tank in Baja Studios, where much of *TITANIC* was filmed. Now, in director Renny Harlin's new film *DEEP BLUE SEA*, a shark lies on a partially submerged platform in the center of the lab. It's not happy.

"They're bringing back this shark for examination," Harlin explains between shots. "They are taking the protein complex from its brain. The scientific finding they have is that sharks—which are pretty much the oldest creatures on Earth, having been around for 450 million years, way before the dinosaurs—don't get any illnesses. They don't get cancer. They never sleep. They never stop moving. They have no predators."

The film stars Stellan Skarsgard, Samuel L. Jackson, LL Cool J, and Michael Rapaport. In the script by Duncan Kennedy and John Zinman, sharks may hold the key to cures for a variety of illnesses, including Alzheimer's disease. "In the movie, they're using the protein complex from the shark's brain to rejuvenate human brain cells. In this scene, they bring this 8000-pound, 25-foot Mako shark into the lab to work on it and make a little hole in its brain, but things go horribly wrong and our friend, Dr. Whitlock [played by Skarsgard], gets his arm bitten off!"

Harlin re-rolls some shots: from different angles, the shark suddenly rears, twists violently to one side and with a sweep of its mouth tears the arm off Dr. Whitlock (who is a stunt man in that instant). Now, the scene is shot from another angle. While Harlin sits with his monitors, the shark thrashes loudly in the water and strikes—and the character, again minus a stage arm, goes down. In real time, without the benefit of digital enhancement, the scene is horrifying. Even at rest, the mechanical shark is menacing and very life-like. And large. To produce more of the chemical, it is necessary to grow sharks with larger brains. But this also makes them smarter—and far more dangerous.

Summer '99, it won't be safe to go in the water, again. □

Short Notes

George Lucas used the official *STAR WARS* website to announce the title of the upcoming prequel: *STAR WARS: EPISODE 1—THE PHANTOM MENACE*. ☺ **Eddie Murphy** is planning to star in *PLUTO NASH* as a lunar colonist fighting for the freedom of the space settlement. ☺ Universal and Imagine Films have landed the rights to remake *HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS* as a live-action feature directed by **Ron Howard** and starring **Jim Carrey**. ☺ **Sharon Stone** may end up playing the title role in *THE MUSE*, a fantasy-comedy from writer-director-actor **Albert Brooks**—about a failing screenwriter who discovers a real muse. ☺ Director **George Miller** is considering *MAD MAX IV* as his next project after *BABE: PIG IN THE CITY*. No word on whether Mel Gibson will return to the title role. ☺ **Lili Taylor** (*THE ADDICTION*) has signed on to star in the new version of *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE*, directed by **Jan DeBont** for DreamWorks. ☺ **Mary Lambert** (*PET SEMATARY*) will direct *IN BETWEEN*, a supernatural drama for Warner Brothers. □

THE SANDMAN COMETH NOT

Neil Gaiman watches Hollywood put his work through Development Hell.

by Paula Vitaris

Fantasy author Neil Gaiman is one of the busiest and most peripatetic of writers. But in between novels, graphic novels, comics, short stories, and poems—and all the traveling for readings, research and cons—Gaiman has found time to go a bit Hollywood. He has been working on several scripts, as well as watching from the wings as a couple of projects based on his work are developed by other writers for the screen. First up is an English-language script Gaiman completed last summer for anime master Hayao Miyazaki's epic *PRINCESS MONONOKE*, which Miramax will release to U.S. theaters next Summer. And Gaiman has handed in the third draft for a feature version of his BBC-TV series *NEVERWHERE*, which will be produced by Denise De Novi (*EDWARD SCISSORHANDS*) and the Jim Henson Studios. Music video director Jesse Dylan (son of Bob) has been tapped to direct. Gaiman is also trying to get off the ground a film version of his graphic novel *Death: The Time of Your Life*, a project whose status he de-



Gaiman considers the screenplay of his graphic novel *The Sandman* to be "the worst thing I've ever read...a script of absolutely astounding badness."

scribes as follows: "It's not alive, but it's not dead." *Good Omens*, the comic novel of the Apocalypse that Gaiman wrote with Terry Pratchett, is also under development for a feature. Gaiman also has two tele-

vision shows in the early stages of development, neither of which he will talk about except to say that one is for an American network.

And then there's the feature film of Gaiman's *Sandman*, currently mired in development hell at Warner Bros. Gaiman is not involved in the scripting, but he has read the various drafts. The script has gone through numerous writers, including Terry Rossio & Ted Elliot, whose work was rewritten by writer-director Roger Avary (*KILLING ZOE*). Avary had hoped to direct, but he parted company with Warner Bros. when his take on the material became too radical for the studio: Avary wanted to use puppets for some of the sequences. The script continues to languish in the hands of even more writers. Gaiman, who has read the latest draft, hopes the movie is permanently shelved rather than filmed in its current incarnation. "It was the

worst thing I think I've ever read," he lamented. "It was a script of absolutely astounding badness. The original script by Elliott and Rossio was not bad. It had a little way to go, but it was faithful to the ideas and the characters. This new one was a heap of nonsense in which Lucifer, the Corinthian, and the Sandman are all brothers fighting for the Dreamworld. It was the kind of thing where I wished I had some kind of control over the rights because I could at least take my name off it."

Last and probably least, there's always acting to fill in those few moments when Gaiman's not writing. During a trip to England, Gaiman provided a voiceover for a character named Baal in a British TV movie called *ARCHANGEL THUNDERBIRD*. The star is Doug Bradley, otherwise known as Pinhead from the *HELLRAISER* movies. "It was 15 minutes in the basement of the U.K. sci-fi channel reading lines for a plasticine monster," Gaiman recalled. Acting, the glamorous life! □

Obituary

by Jay Stevenson

Akira Kurosawa

The great Japanese filmmaker died in September at the age of 88. Although most renowned in this country for his masterful samurai epics (*THE SEVEN SAMURAI*, *YOJIMBO*, *SANJURO*), he included fantasy in several films: *RASHOMON* (1950), *THRONE OF BLOOD* (a retelling of *Macbeth*, 1957), and *DREAMS* (1990). All contain elements of the supernatural, and *THE HIDDEN FORTRESS* (1958) was George Lucas' acknowledged structural model for *STAR WARS*.

Disappointingly, the official bios in the Hollywood trade papers completely ignored Kurosawa's long association with the late *GODZILLA*-director Ishiro Honda. The two apprenticed together, and Honda was credited as "advisor" or "consultant" on Kurosawa's last five films: *KAGEMUSHA/THE SHADOW WARRIOR* (1980), *RAN* (a.k.a., *CHAOS*, 1985), *DREAMS*, *RHAPSODY IN AUGUST* (1991), and *MADADAYO* (1993). The episodic *DREAMS*, in particular, shows Honda's influence, with sequences devoted to a nuclear meltdown of Mt. Fuji and a post-apocalyptic landscape filled with giant flora mutated by radiation. □

Ed Pressman

continued from previous page

Oscar-nominated foreign language film by director Patrice Leconte about pre-French Revolution courtly intrigue]. People who are against us making the movie haven't read her script, which is marvelously scathing and lethally funny. It's not porno violence at all."

Two other Pressman projects are near fruition. *THE CROW 3*, originally offered to *CEMETERY MAN* director Michele Soavi, will be directed in January by Bahrat Nailluri, director of the recent tepid British thriller *DOWNTIME*. And the long-in-development adaptation of the Continental

comic book sensation *THE MUTANT CHRONICLES* will finally go before the cameras under the direction of Roger Christian (*THE SENDER*). Pressman said, "I had *THE MUTANT CHRONICLES* set up at Fox with Stephen Norrington [*DEATH MACHINE*] directing, but escalating budgetary concerns delayed the project. Then Stephen was offered *BLADE*, so he went off to make that instead. Roger Christian is a protégé of George Lucas. He's just finished working as the second unit director of the new *STAR WARS* film, and we plan to film *THE MUTANT CHRONICLES* in Luxembourg." □

Production Starts




LOST SOULS

Winona Ryder stars in this supernatural thriller from New Line Cinema. Former cinematographer Janusz Kaminski directs, working from a script by Pierce Gardner. Meg Ryan produces.

A STIR OF ECHOES

David Koepf writes and directs this adaptation of the novel by Richard Matheson (author of *What Dreams May Come*). The murder-mystery plot follows a man who gains psychic powers after being hit on the head in an accident. Kevin Bacon stars in this production from Artisan Entertainment.



Prince of Egypt

Making Dreamworks' cartoon epic.

By Mike Lyons

DreamWorks certainly is an animation studio full of surprises. First, several years ago, they announced that their debut feature will not be the traditional Broadway-esque fairy-tale, but instead a re-telling of the Biblical saga of Moses, entitled *THE PRINCE OF EGYPT*. Then, they maneuvered the release date of their computer-animated *ANTZ* ahead of this most eagerly-awaited of all non-Disney features.

Now, as its December 18th release date draws near, it seems as if *THE PRINCE OF EGYPT* will be an even bigger surprise—a true testing of animation's boundaries. So, what's the film got that animation's never seen before? "Epic scale," noted Richie Chavez, one of *PRINCE OF EGYPT*'s two art directors. "There's been no other animated film that's come up to this level. We had to really drive it there, because the story is that big. It's about the clashing of two cultures with God in between. It doesn't get much bigger than that."

The film begins like Cecil B. DeMille's famed 1956 epic *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*, Val Kilmer headlining the cast of voices in the film, as Moses, who grows up a prince alongside his half-brother, Ramses (Ralph Fiennes).

By the time Moses declares, "Let my people go!," it's safe to say that animation has indeed come a long way, not just from the squeaking images of Mickey Mouse that first appeared in 1928, but also from the Saturday morning static that domi-

nated the medium just two decades back.

"I took this project, because I felt it was an opportunity to take apart animation and move it to a new stage," said *PRINCE OF EGYPT*'s production designer, Darek Gogol, adding, "There have been enough fairy tales in animation. It's time to take on much more serious stories and I think a Biblical story is most definitely serious enough."

You want serious? How about the fact that DreamWorks is unflinchingly including all the elements of the tale—the killing of each first born, blood running through the Nile, the burning bush, the parting of the Red Sea. Adding to this is a roster of A-list actors, in a voice cast that would topple the stage on Oscar night, including, in addition to Kilmer and Fiennes, Jeff Goldblum as Moses' Hebrew brother Aaron, Patrick Stewart as Moses' Egyptian father, Seti, Sandra Bullock as Miriam, Moses' Hebrew sister, Michelle Pfeiffer as wife Tziporah and Steve Martin and Martin Short as com-

ic relief court magicians, Hotep and Guy, respectively. In addition, there are six new songs by Stephen Schwartz (*POCAHONTAS*) and a score from Hans Zimmer, who crafted the haunting strains of *THE LION KING*.

In creating the look for this mammoth project, the DreamWorks artists turned to the work of the late, great director David Lean, whose films, such as *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA* (1962), formed the basis for its epic scale. "His films are so huge, they're just beautiful," noted Kathy Altieri, *PRINCE OF EGYPT*'s other art director. "They're filled with vast landscapes and also have the intimate detail that can be found in the character relationships. That's the kind of breadth that we were looking for."

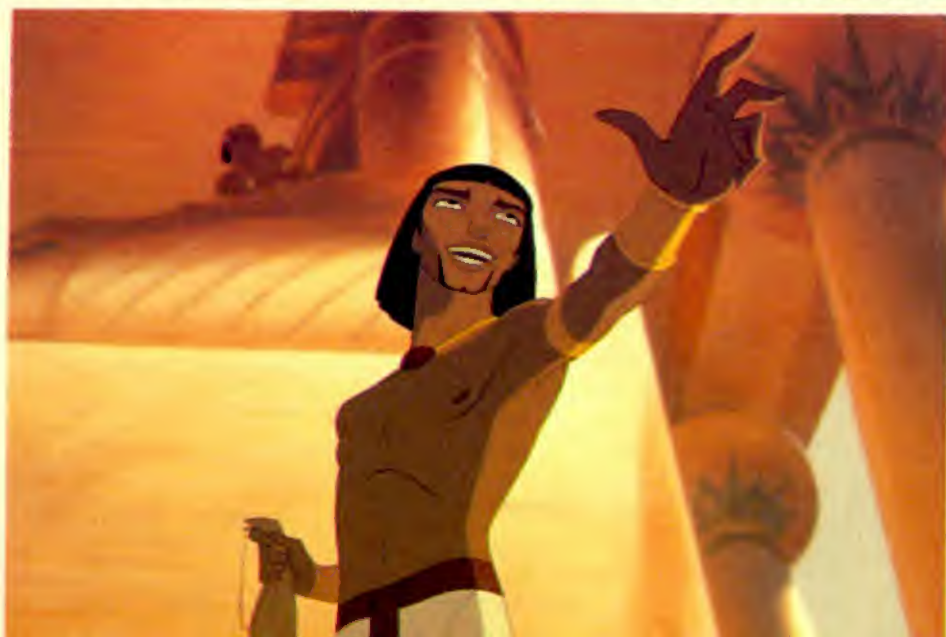
The artists behind the film also looked at the masters of the Impressionist period, as well as Egyptian art. "It's very flat, there's no perspective," said Gogol of art from the Egyptian world. "The scale of the objects depends upon the social stature—the king

would be the biggest and the other people would get smaller in proportion. I thought, 'How the hell can we apply this philosophy of thinking to a three-dimensional world? The king can't be bigger than the palaces and temples in the film!'"

Gogol came up with a distinct look, creating concept art in which he exaggerated the Egyptian architecture, so that it seemingly overwhelmed the Hebrew world. This, however, drew some skepticism from the studio, especially Jeffrey

continued on page 60

Moses (voiced by Val Kilmer) confronts Pharaoh (above) with step-brother Ramses (Ralph Fiennes) in an epic retelling of *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*.



CARRIE II

United Artists makes a sequel to the finest King adaptation.

By William Wilson Goodson

CARRIE is generally considered a critical and financial success, the first, and one of the best of the many film adaptations of Stephen King's work. Sissy Spacek and Piper Laurie both received Oscar nominations for their performances. The question arises, why make a sequel? Wasn't the first film complete with the death of Carrie White? We'll find out when United Artists releases CARRIE II nationwide July 9.

When writer Rafael Moreu (HACKERS) was approached by United Artists, holders of the copyright, about writing a sequel, he asked for a weekend to consider those questions. "I said, 'Let me read the original book and look at the original film again and see if I can figure my way into it.' It made me remember how much I enjoyed them 'cause I grew up reading a lot of King. I called them on Monday and said I would be very interested in doing it, if you let me follow a very similar emotional trajectory to the character in the original who has all this armor to protect herself.

"In the original, it was the mother who put [the armor] on her. In this version, because of the circumstances of her life, she put it on herself. I wanted to do the kind of character who does piercing and tatoos and is



Amy Irving, star of the original film, returns in her role as Susan Snell, Carrie's one true friend, who is now a high school counselor.

really strong."

Moreau noted the script almost wrote itself. "You know the old adage, if you are in trouble on a script, go back to the character and they will tell you how to write your way out? It's true. I asked how would she react in a particular situation.

"Also, something I thought quite fascinating is it [telekenesis] is like the king's disease, hemophilia, which is passed on at birth. It only comes out in the female progeny."

The director Katt Shea (STRIPPED TO KILL) also emphasized, "It's not a remake. Its really a sequel. You know

Rachel is related to Carrie. There is a genetic link. It's about an outcast, a girl who has special abilities. It's about family relationships. It's about social divisions, even in high school, and how it affects them.

"In this one, she is a little tougher, she's not quite as timid. She is quiet and kind of reserved but she has a side to her that is more protective than Carrie. Actually, her natural mother is much more vulnerable than Carrie's mother. She is not a good mother only because she is insane [we see her in a mental hospital]. She really cares about Rachel, she really tries to take care of her, she just isn't capable. She is really sympathetic and Rachel really loves her."

The only survivor of the important characters in the original CARRIE was Susan Snell, played by Amy Irving (YENTL) in her first big film role. She was a sympathetic young woman who attempted to help Carrie have a teenage romantic dream of a prom night. Irving reappears as Susan Snell who, according to Katt Shea, "has been through a lot. She herself was institutionalized after the first CARRIE. She is a counselor at the high school." She can spot the symptoms of an emerging telekenetic and tries hard to reach Rachel.

According to Emily Bergl, who is making her feature debut as Rachel, "Because of the guilt



Emily Bergl stars as Rachel, a blood relative of the original's Carrie White.

she feels about what happened before, she becomes a guidance counselor at a high school trying to help kids. I have a trauma early on and she wants to try and help me explore my feelings, to open up a little bit. But my character is very averse to that because she knows whenever she opens up and becomes emotional, strange things start to happen."

In the original film, director Brian DePalma used blood as a continuing motif, beginning with Carrie's menstrual blood, the blood of Christ worshiped by Carrie's mother, and finally the pig's blood dumped on Carrie at the prom. Shea also admits to having a recurring motif of this kind planned but she will not say much more than it is about parents. Everyone connected with the film is very careful to avoid revealing the surprise ending which they all expect to match the famous destruction of the gym and the hand coming out of a grave in the original.

Dylan Bruno (WING COMMANDER IV) plays Mark, "the head of the bad guys, the captain of the football team. All my cronies follow my lead. Basically I decide that the lead girl, Emily, who plays Rachel, is threatening to take my best friend Jessie [Jason London] away from me, and I decide I

DIRECTOR KATT SHEA

“It’s not a remake. It’s really a sequel. Rachel is related to Carrie. There’s a genetic link. It’s about an outcast, family relationships, social division, and how it affects [people].”



The sequel follows a similar dramatic trajectory, updated to today’s body-piercing teens, with Rachel unleashing her devastating telekinetic powers.

am going to pay her back for doing that. I am the guy you are waiting to see get his due.

“At heart, she is more honest than most of the people she has surrounded herself with at school. The cool popular kids in the school decide they are going to play a practical joke on her to pay her back for all the wrongs she has done to them, in their minds. A big party at my father’s house is where the practical joke happens. I would say it is what sets off the final event. I have a scene with her when we have a big fight in the pool that looks like a lot of fun.”

Bruno is quite convincing as a high school football player and it is probable he could snap Rachel in two like a twig. “But she has all these supernatural powers that makes the fight a little bit in her favor, if anything.”

Elijah Grady will play Chuck, “One of the conniving football players,” he said. “Nobody messes with them, so when somebody different from them [like Rachel] comes in, it challenges them. These guys, their mentality is a little psychotic.” He goes so far as to declare the final trick they play on Rachel as “sick.”

The football team in the film shaved their heads as a sign of solidarity, so all the

actors have shaved or wear bald caps. Grady shaved his head, but then ran into some problems. Skinhead racists are rather a sour point in Charlotte, N.C. the southern city where CARRIE II was shot. “In one restaurant, I had to ask for a waitress three times. I went up to the waitress and asked why they wouldn’t serve me and one came right out and said ‘Do you blame us?’ It’s strange how people perceive you by a glance. It’s kind of depressing.”

Probably the most recognizable face among the actors is Zachery Ty Bryan, who has played the oldest son of Tim ‘The Toolman’ Taylor for eight seasons on the hit sitcom HOME IMPROVEMENT. “My character has a big part in mov-

ing this plot along,” said Bryan. “I am the bad boy. I am the one who really screws up. I am the one who has sex with this girl, we find out she is a minor, and she commits suicide.

“Rachel is the step-sister of Carrie. She is kind of not popular at the beginning, then Jason London [BLOOD TIES] falls in love with her, but he is part of our group. We totally hate Jessie [Jason London] because he is going after this loser chick and we don’t know who the heck she is and we kind of torment her.”

“Rachel obtains the pictures that were taken of me and Lisa, the one I had sex with. So we are trying to get the pictures from Rachel before she gives them to the cops—and then she kind of uses her powers to kick—it has a pretty crazy little ending.”

Before the climax, there will be a certain amount of wire work as Rachel busts open lockers and moves trinkets around. The exciting or crazy ending will take place on a large detailed two-story set showing a patio with a small pool, a glass wall with sliding doors and inside a living room with an enclosed bar, stairwell, and hanging hallway. This unusual one-piece set was built inside the old Civic Center in downtown

Charlotte. Unfortunately, a rumor was started that they were going to burn down a house inside the deserted center, causing some local consternation.

Roy Arbogast, one of the special effects wizards on the show was allowed to tell me a few things, on the understanding that he would not reveal who dies how. “We are doing the first unit physical effects,” said Arbogast. “We do the implosion of the house with the big glass front. We are doing that with an air mortar. It is a big yellow tank filled with compressed air and electric valves. When you open the valves it’s just a huge air explosion. We are using everything from thousand-gallon tanks to 92-gallon tanks.

“When the glass implodes, a lot of people die right then from the big shards of glass, flying pieces sticking in people, one cuts a guy’s head off.

“Most of that will be wire rigged. Wire work and what we call popups. It’s a piece of glass rigged like a mouse trap effect. If you wanted a big one out your back it could be huge.

“Then Rachel starts the fire. She just magically blows up all the liquor bottles. She makes the fireplace explode and the logs fly out and the alcohol flames out. She closes all the shutters and starts those on fire, so now everybody is trapped.”

The smaller explosions of the bottles and logs will be done with squibs.

The shutters will burn in a controlled fashion using a gel smeared on them. They have three sets of shutters for multiple takes.

The mayhem continues. She kills people with pokers. CDs come flying out and act as flying knives. This is mostly done with wires but some CDs will be hurled by mechanical throwers. □

Bergi as Rachel is cradled by Jason London, a high school romance destroyed by malicious peers. Retitled CARRIE: SAY YOU’RE SORRY, the film now opens July 9.



CA

Artist Steve

By Chuck Wagner

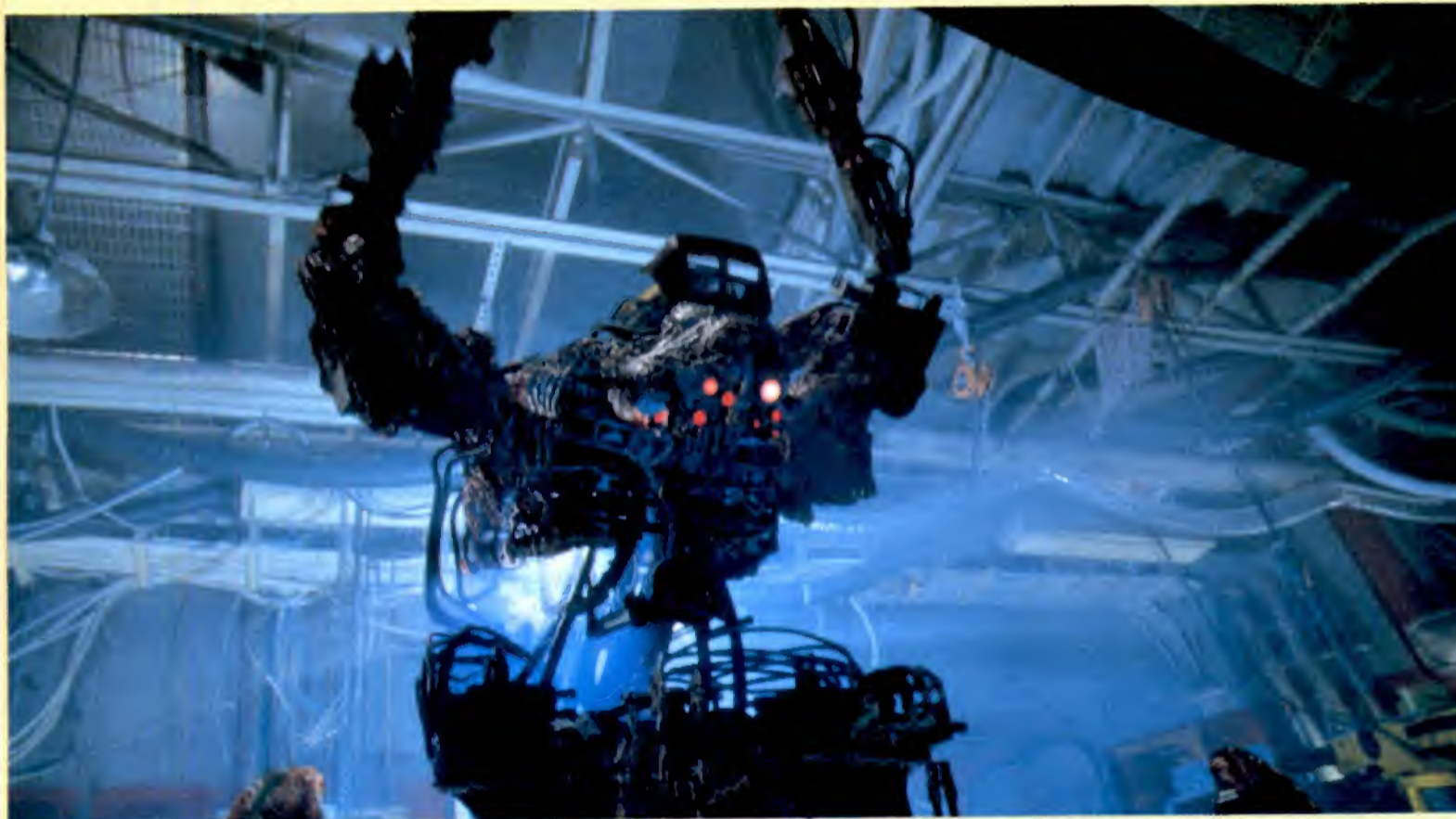
In the film *VIRUS*, there's a requirement for large monsters with handles like 'Goliath' and 'the seven-footers.' When the producers of the film needed these creatures built, they turned to Steve Burg for concepts and Eric Allard and his company All Effects for construction.

"I started out in animation effects," Burg explained. "I met John Bruno ten years ago on *THE ABYSS*. I—along with Ron Cobb—did conceptual artwork on it and were among the first people to start work on it. It stands out in my mind as a really challenging project. We learned a lot."

John Bruno got the Academy Award for *THE ABYSS*. And years later, chose *VIRUS* as his feature directing debut. Universal Pictures opens the film nation-



Jamie Lee Curtis as Kelly "Kit" Foster, the navigator and meteorologist aboard the tugboat Sea Star, who must escape and then dismantle Goliath, a sentient machine run amuck in *VIRUS*, full scale mechanical model created by Eric Allard.

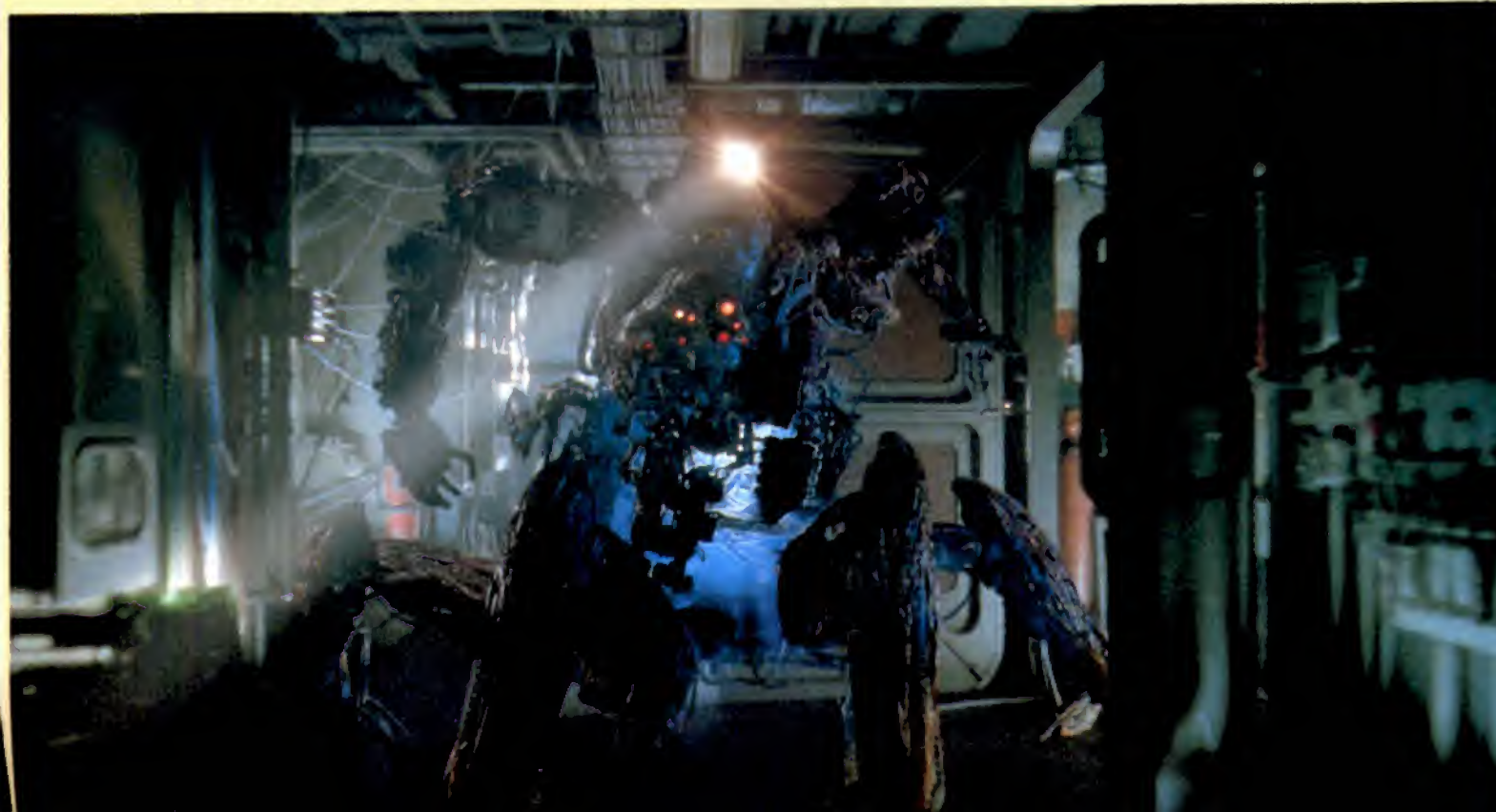


Live action scenes of Goliath were supplemented by post-production computer graphics (above and below) created by the Tippett Studio. Right: Animation supervisor Tom Schelesny choreographs action with the Goliath input device.



wide January 15th, after postponing its release last August.

"I worked on *VIRUS* at two different points," Burg explained. "The first was sort of a quick run-through in very, very early development. John wanted to get a handle on what it was like on the ship and what the robots might look like. But a lot of other people worked on this. Steve Johnson at XFX also had an artist who was very influential in the process."



EATING GOLIATH

Burg and All Effects' Eric Allard on VIRUS.

"I did design on the more robotic creatures. The bigger ones. John had me mainly work on the eight-footer and Goliath. These designs were problematic because of the idea that they were made from parts that would theoretically have come from the ship itself."

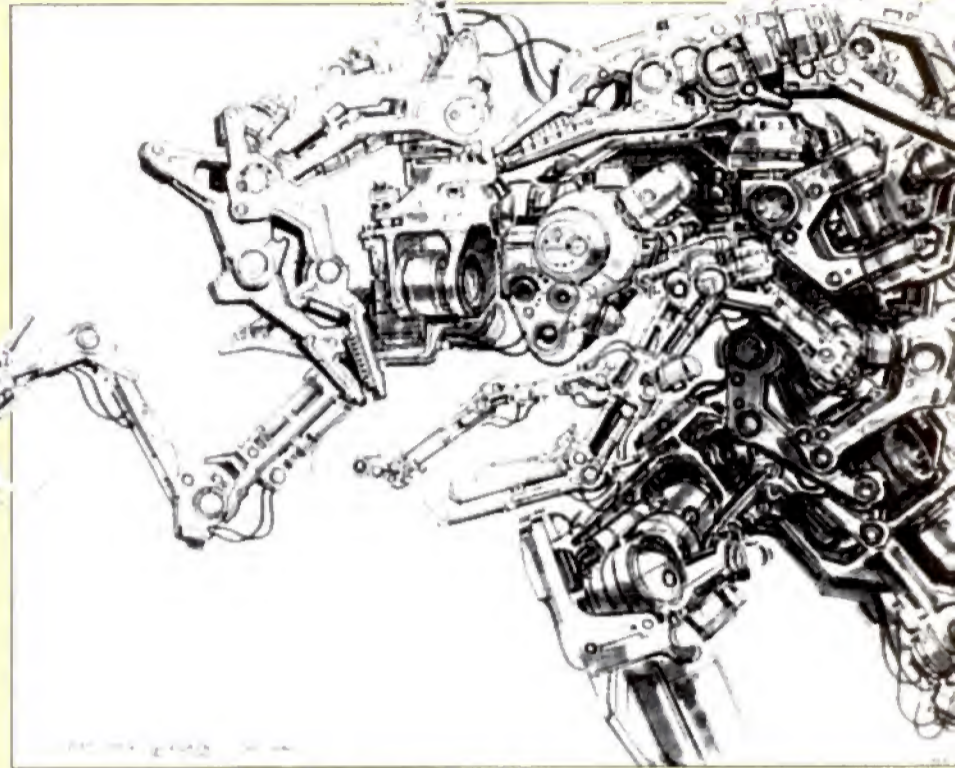
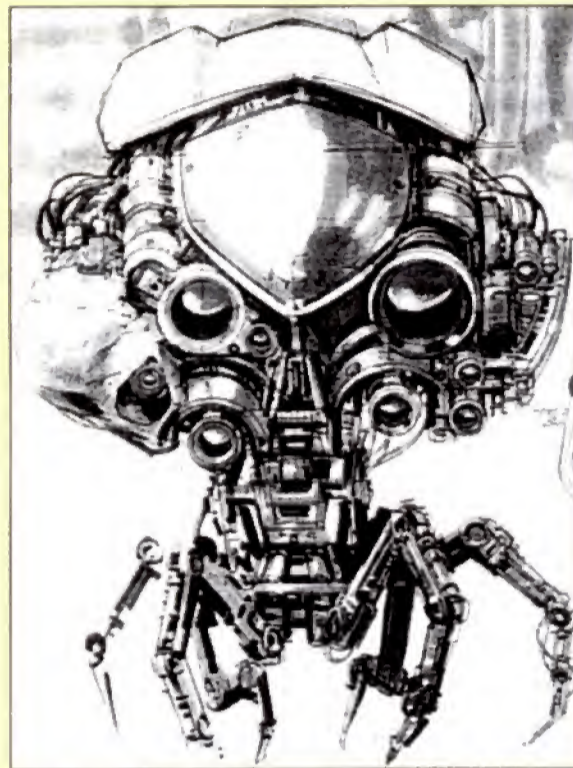
Eric Allard, whose company built Goliath for on-set filming in North Carolina, related some of the difficulties. "The design kind of evolved. We had very little time—15 weeks—to build it. We never really got a clear input on what the look was, so it ended up being kind of a composite of ideas that came in and basically what we could do in the time that we had."

"The seven, eight-footers were very massive," Burg said. "The Goliath was—John wanted—a monstrosity. I was shocked when I saw it. Because of the nature of it, the people making it had to interpret quite a bit and find shapes. I don't have any idea of what they had to go through to make them."

Allard does. "The seven-footers were the later stage of the bio-mechanoids," said Allard, whose All Effects Company was hired to build them for filming. "They're some of the bigger characters. They were basically seven-foot tall hydraulic, animatronic creatures. We built a hydraulic version and a puppet version, driven by rods. The puppet version is just as big as the hydraulic version. The hydraulic seven-footer weighed about 3500 pounds!

"These were like big machines that had human interior parts like bone and muscle tissue and that sort of thing. Unlike Steve Johnson's which were half human and half machine. Ours were like 80% machine with 20% tissue.

"Goliath is basically the climactic robot," Allard explained.



Goliath concept art by designer Steve Burg. Universal opens the sea-going science fiction thriller on January 15.

"He's the Queen-Alien equivalent and stands 12-14 feet tall, depending on how he's standing. And he weighed 6000 pounds and had 70 axes, 30 of which were hydraulic and 40 were servo. We trucked it to the location. It had four legs and four arms, and it had all kinds of little grabber-type tentacle things. Eye-movements, neck movements and waist rotation—all told it was 70 axes, or just under 70. It took quite a bit of power."

Allard got into this business when he created the robot for *SHORT CIRCUIT* in 1986. "I was a Green Beret in the Army and when I got out of that I got into special effects," he said. "I've had my own business now for about 12 years." Allard is currently working on *STUART LITTLE*.

Allard said he chose hydraulic controls for Goliath because it had to move fast. "*SHORT CIRCUIT* robot was all electro-mechanical and I prefer that because hydraulics are such a pain in the butt! We were limited in the selection of hydraulic components we could use for Goliath because

of the time we were allowed. I just wish we'd had a lot more time to build it."

Allard seemed to hedge when asked if he was satisfied with the results. "It seems that in films they're willing to spend just about anything on the back end to fix the problems that are created by not planning the front end," he replied. "I can't blame anybody but myself for accepting the project, but I just can't help but feel that had we had more time, we could've enjoyed a better result. It's been my experience that whenever you have a proper amount of time to plan something, you just get a better result than when you don't."

Though Allard has employed as many as 200 people, All Effects is now much smaller. Allard subscribes to the notion that you don't need to build a permanent business to be successful. "Rather than having a big shop that I continually try to keep going, I'm looking more to staffing up and shopping up as the work warrants. I think it's the way to go." With the ebb and flow of Hollywood, one

can't argue.

"There's only a couple of Rick Bakers out there who can command their own price," said Allard. "The rest of us are left to fight for these jobs. The studios play one against the other and you end up cutting your budget down to the point where you have to take a lot of work to keep a big shop going.

"The whole reason for getting into the business in the first place is to do these interesting projects and not to have an empire."

Steve Burg is currently working on the cartoon feature *PLANET ICE* at Fox, which considered using computer graphics but opted for conventional animation instead. "I see myself getting involved more and more in 3D computer graphics. I'd like to do a film on the computer. I have a set-up at home, but time is the problem. Doug Trumbull was my idol when I started out, so I originally wanted to be in effects."

And conceptual design is never very far away. "It seems that every three or four years, I design a robot!" Burg chuckled. □

THE FACULTY

Director Robert Rodriguez on giving teen horror a new look.

By Jon Keeyes

Like a Texas tornado sweeping across the land, director Robert Rodriguez and the creative forces at Miramax Films have spent the last few years tearing down and rebuilding the cinematic thriller genre. And now, for a third Christmas season, this explosive team will be reinventing the genre once again.

"SCREAM 2 hadn't even come out yet when Bob Weinstein sent me the script [for *THE FACULTY*] and he said, 'This is our movie for next Christmas. You need to shoot this before you do your other movies.' And I could understand that because they've staked out Christmas as being theirs," said Rodriguez. "What's so cool is that Bob Weinstein, the head of Dimension, is just on top of it. He called me up before *SCREAM 2* and you could tell it was going to be really big because everyone was excited about it. He said next year there's going to be everyone ripping off the *SCREAM* movies so they were going to come out with this one which is different than all these other ones—it won't be a slasher movie. And I was like sure Bob, way to think ahead. And sure enough, now there's all these other movies like *SCREAM* and *THE FACULTY* is really different at a time when people will want something else. Instead of horror it's more of a sci-fi thriller set in high

school and it has those realistic undertones; conspiracy, especially adult conspiracy, which you always felt in high school whether they were from another planet or not. You always felt like the adults were ganging up on you."

Rodriguez continued by elaborating on the film's premise. "*THE FACULTY* is one of those 'Are you, you?' kind of movies. It's an *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* type of movie of conformity and individuality set in high school. It was just the best setting for that kind of movie. I was always a fan of those kind of movies. In fact, I think *THE THING* was one of the best. And having this in a high school is so great because you don't trust anyone anyway. Even your best friends are changing and stabbing you in the back on a daily basis because

everyone is going through changes. It's one of those darker periods in everyone's lives. People kind of block it out. That's why other movies can paint a rosier picture of what it was like in high school. So I got to go back and re-create my old high school which was pretty brutal. This is one of those movies that reminds you how dark high school can be."

The script Rodriguez originally received had been intended as Kevin Williamson's directorial debut, but upon realizing the vast number of special effects the movie required, Williamson passed on it. For Rodriguez, he initially had no intention of doing *THE FACULTY* as he was eager to work on his own scripts. But it was when he saw screenwriter Kevin Williamson's name attached to it that his interest sud-

Rodriguez, an accomplished cartoonist, sketches a scene during filming of *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN*, and worked with Bernie Wrightson on *THE FACULTY*.



Laura Harris discovers that all is not what it should be in science class.

denly became piqued.

"Kevin and I both like the same kind of movies," said Rodriguez, "and when I read this one I realized this is the exact kind of movie I would have gone to see five times if I was 15 or 16 years old, like *THE THING* or *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*. That's why I felt so comfortable doing this. And Kevin's scripts are just really good versions of those kinds of movies: good dialogue, great characters, which is the most important part, and the story works really well."

Agreeing to take on the project, Rodriguez's first job was to sit down with Williamson to flesh out what was otherwise too short of a script. "We ultimately didn't change a whole lot but we did go through and try some things. We added probably the best whole 12-minute sequence in the movie that stands out near the middle of it. It was something Kevin had already thought of but didn't put in because he didn't think it would work. I told him I

TERMINATOR TEACHER

T-1000 Robert Patrick on playing the high school football coach from hell.

By Jon Keeyes

For Robert Patrick, the last 14 years have been a series of films which have garnered him worldwide critical praise. Almost anyone knows Patrick by a few simple words: T-1000, the villainous cyborg in *TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY*.

Over the years, Patrick has had the good fortune to play a range of roles that any actor would envy. Beginning with his premiere role as a psychotic biker in Roger Corman's *WARLORDS FROM HELL*, he has done everything from playing a futuristic cowboy in *EQUALIZER 2000* to comedies like *STRIPTease* to a romantic hero in *FUTURE HUNTERS*.

While he had already built a career on fine acting, it was his role in *T2* which brought him widespread fame, and led to his cameo reprisals of the T-1000 character in *WAYNE'S WORLD* and *THE LAST ACTION HERO*.

Now, fresh off the heels of further praise for his bad-guy role in *COPLAND*, Patrick is preparing to meet his fans once again in Robert Rodriguez's sci-fi/horror thriller, *THE FACULTY*. "I'm a pretty extreme version of a high school football coach...and...I become nicer as the movie goes on. I go from being bad to good."

For Patrick, his time spent on *THE FACULTY* has proven to be a tremendous learning experience. With nearly ten actors sharing star billing, Patrick has



Patrick as a sinister high school coach in a teen take-off of *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*, having an acting field day.

had to stay on his toes. "Working with the young actors has been great and then on the other hand you have the seasoned actors who've been great. You've got people like Piper Laurie and Elijah Wood. I was in high school when I saw *CARRIE* and now here I am doing scenes with Piper."

Though speaking fondly of the cast, it is director Robert Rodriguez who really makes Patrick open up. Noted the actor "I was given a great deal of room to work with my character which can be fun and a little scary, 'cause I like to mess around. The cool thing about Robert is that he edits the movies himself. If I show up with a lot of stuff to do I can say, 'Hey, let me just screw around with it for awhile' and I do and a couple of days later I'll hear that Robert took pieces of this take and that take—sort of

like a greatest hits—and put them together into one scene, and that's been fun. Robert is on all the time. The first day of filming I was [amazed] the guy [was] operating the camera too, and that's both exciting and intimidating because he's right on the other side of the lens."

As a matter of fact, it wasn't the film itself, but the creative force behind the project that truly motivated Patrick to take the role. "It was Robert and Kevin Williamson [*SCREAM*] and the chance to work with those two guys," recalled Patrick. "I had worked with Robert in the producer/actor capacity when I did the *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN* sequel *TEXAS BLOOD MONEY*, and I think that's when he started thinking about me for this role. I have a great deal of admiration for him and how he made his mark in the business."

It will be the incredible combination of creative people in front of, and behind, the camera that will ensure *THE FACULTY* is a success. For Patrick, he feels that one of the motivating forces that will attract people to the film is its science fiction slant on horror. "I think we've reached a point now where the world is getting smaller and maybe we've got to start looking elsewhere for villains. We're looking and we're all just wondering what happens to us, why we're all here, is there life on other planets—stuff like that? It's been building and building. We've got a fascination with what's out there, and at the same time a little fear of what that will be." □



Rodriguez directs Kevin Williamson's script, which avoids slasher gore.

thought it was what was missing and sure enough it's the biggest thing in the movie."

With the script completed Rodriguez immediately went to work on the film's special effects designs. Having already been through the process on *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN*, Rodriguez wanted to get as much early preparation completed so he could have a solid focus once filming began. "I brought Greg Nicotero who worked on *DUSK TILL DAWN* down to Austin and we just started coming up with concepts and drawings and then we got Bernie Wrightson to draw a bunch of original, initial concept designs for what the different effects could be. That was the coolest thing getting on my fax machine at home different drawings coming in from Bernie Wrightson."

But it wasn't the effects that would become the largest task for Rodriguez: it was the casting. With more than 12 primary characters, Rodriguez had no idea who he was going to cast. "I

HORROR'S TEEN STARS OF TOMORROW

Shawn Hatosy, Josh Hartnett and Elijah Wood on toiling in the entry-level teen horror vineyards.

By Jon Keeyes

To get anyone to divulge details of *THE FACULTY* plot is nearly impossible. Every actor and crew member had to sign "non-disclosure" contracts. "I can tell you very little and if I tell you more I'd have to kill you," laughed Shawn Hatosy, who acted with Kevin Costner in *THE POSTMAN*. "It has that element of the young kids, all different types, all individual, who are thrown together in a situation where they're trying to, in essence, save the world. So you have all these unlikely friendships developing through the story. And then you have — on the backdrop of that — the faculty. It's a story of paranoia. Clea DuVall and I were doing this rehearsal and I had the Scooby Doo theme going through my head because of how much it's like a Scooby Doo episode."

Whodunit thrillers have become a thriving enterprise through the efforts of Kevin Williamson and his new brand of horror films. Already a star of one Williamson project, Josh Hartnett provided the closest look at the heart of *THE FACULTY*. "It's a little like *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*, and it's set in high school and [the teenagers] are the heroes. Kinda like a teen body snatchers and with Kevin Williamson's script it has that spark...that flair."

Part of the flair that has made Williamson a staple in the horror/thriller industry is his ability to provide intelligent characters that people can relate to. Noted Hatosy, "In essence, the characters are stereotyped, but that's where Williamson is so good. He sort of writes about cliques you see in high school and the kids identify with that."

In speaking with the young men who comprise the "heroes" of the film it's easy to see the independent yet stereotypical nature of their characters. Take for instance Elijah Wood, the cast-proclaimed leader of the heroes, who plays Casey. "What's so



Hatosy (l), Laura Harris, Hartnett, Jordana Brewster, Clea DuVall and Wood (r) make up the teen cast, balanced by an acting *FACULTY* of seasoned pros.

cool is that he's a stereotypical, everyday geek," said Wood. "Basically he's the school punching bag. He ends up being the hero. He takes charge when he finds his strengths and essentially becomes the hero."

With the geek in line, next comes Stan the jock, played by Hatosy. "He's sort of like the all-around, all-American, good-natured jock who realizes that's not what he really wants anymore," said Hatosy. "He's kind of sick of all the stuff that's going on. You know, being applauded just for throwing passes."

But what would a school be without the really cool guy? Noted Josh Hartnett of Zeke, his character, "When they came to me with the part they said he was the coolest guy in school and I took it and kind of put my own ideas of cool on it and so it turned out to be a hybrid of their cool. He becomes an icon in the school. Everyone has one in school, that kid that you just don't talk to cause you don't know what the hell is going to happen. And then my idea was that this kid is so in tune with himself that he doesn't really need outside validation, so he's a stable little entity within himself."

Not forgetting the "pretty, quiet girl" (Laura Harris) or the rebel girl (Clea Du-

Vall), what Williamson has created is almost a *BREAKFAST CLUB* of characters that nearly any moviegoer will be able to empathize with. But a great script can become average without a great director to breathe life into it. "This movie is amazing!" exclaimed Elijah Wood. "We've got an amazing crew and Robert Rodriguez is absolutely amazing. If I had to make any movie with any director, it would have to be Robert. His way of telling stories is way too fun."

It is Robert Rodriguez who will bring the true nature and appeal of *THE FACULTY* to life. Having gained recognition for his Spanish speaking film

EL MARIACHI, Rodriguez's personable touches, fast-paced action sequences, and signature rock-n-roll ambience catapulted him to cult icon status when he released *DESPERADO* and then *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN*. Known for his enthusiasm and perfectionist attitude, Rodriguez appeals to actors through his complete control over the film; not only is he the director, but he is the producer, camera operator and editor. "Robert's like a little kid," said Hatosy. "He's a little, little kid with toys that cost a lot of money and he really loves his job. I mean we had been rehearsing for weeks and he was shooting us on his video camera. We were like 'Oh, that's cool. He knows what he wants.' So we get to work the first day and he's cut together the whole movie just from video with music, narration, and a trailer. It gave us a really good sense of the way he saw things and how we were going to work."

To terrify is one of the driving forces behind *THE FACULTY*. Labeled as a sci-fi thriller, special effects teams were constantly on hand to provide their chilling trade. "They're doing a lot with puppets so we can see what's going on," said Hartnett. "Then, they'll go back in later and do all this CGI stuff." □

“THE FACULTY [is the] kind of movie you have so much work to do after you’re done filming for it to become what it needs to become.”

—Director Robert Rodriguez—

think I went out and saw every young actor out there. It took forever. I literally didn’t complete the casting until a week before we started filming, and that was just for the parts of the six kids. It was such a group casting. I cast Clea DuVall and Josh Hartnett the same week and then it just got really difficult because then everyone else I had on the top of my list fell away because they wouldn’t work with the other actors.

“It was really cool working with both sets of actors and it all happened by accident, scheduling wise. I shot with the kids for a couple of weeks and then they just went away for two or three weeks because there was nothing for them to do. Then I shot with the adult cast for a few weeks and it was really like making two different movies—it was really wild. I really wanted to do this film also because I enjoyed working with the young actors on my movie ROAD RACERS. They were so fresh, and full of energy, and loving it so much and I wanted to do that again. That’s what’s been fun about working with fresh new faces that haven’t really been seen in movies before because your getting to work with these people who are going to become stars. And then at the same time I got to work with these people like Piper Laurie and Robert Patrick and Bebe Neuwirth—these people who are so on top of things and it was such a different vibe.”

Two of the big actors garnering some attention from this film are Robert Patrick (TERMINATOR 2) and beauty, Salma Hayek (DESPERADO). Explained Rodriguez, “The way it works at Miramax is almost like the old studio casting. They like to work with the same actors. There’s this stable of actors they like to use a lot. Robert Patrick did so great in COPLAND that his name would come up often—along with other people—and that’s who you gravitate towards: people who are in the family. It’s like a huge family over there so he was one of the top choices for that role and when he came in he was just perfect.

“As for Salma, she’s in this one by accident. I told her when I first got the script, ‘You know,



Bebe Neuwirth as the high school principal in the grip of an alien power, unfazed by a bloody injury.

this is going to be the one movie you’re not going to be in. There’s no part for you. Who would you play?’ But she ended up playing the school nurse. I originally thought that would be too stupid—I never have had a school nurse who looked like her. So we shot her without makeup and tried to dress her down. We knew she couldn’t be completely Salma or it’d come off too hokey.”

Just like his knack for casting, Rodriguez’s films take on a particular feel due to the signature rock-n-roll sounds which pervade his pictures. But for THE FACULTY, Rodriguez took a slightly different approach. “As the editor of my pictures, I’d end up putting in music that I had no intention of using, just music that I had on hand like demos so that I would have a rhythm to cut to. So on movies like ROAD RACERS or DESPERADO, where I foresaw this happening, I’d have all the music chosen before we even went out there so I would already have the music in my head even as we shot rather than waiting for editing. It was easier

to do that with rock-n-roll than with a score because you don’t need an orchestra, just a three or four piece band. But THE FACULTY I didn’t think was going to be very song-driven as much. I thought it would be more score oriented—at least that was my first impression when I read it. Having shot it, there are places in it where the music comes forward and drives the picture for a bit so it came out kinda cool.”

For Rodriguez, music is but one of his many talents. He has built his reputation on being a director, screenwriter, producer, camera operator, and editor—and that’s all on the same film. From pre-production to post-production, Rodriguez is a part of every aspect of THE FACULTY. And with filming completed, he began the arduous task of editing the film. “THE FACULTY is not a dramatic film, which can be satisfying, but not to make. On a drama what you shoot on the set is exactly what the movie is going to be later in the editing room. It’s all performance or actor-based. If I was doing

a drama I would turn it over to someone else for editing because the fun would be over. With this kind of movie you have so much work to do after you’re done filming for it to become what it needs to become. It’s just a bunch of puzzle pieces and I have to figure out how to put them together.”

If his record can stand in testament then it’s likely that the puzzle pieces will fit perfectly. “I inherited this film because it was a tough nut to crack because there’s so much going on. Even as my sixth movie it was a lot of work—and a whole lot of fun.” □

THE FACULTY possessed: Piper Laurie as the drama teacher, Salma Hayek as the school nurse and Patrick, playing on teen fears of alienation and paranoia.

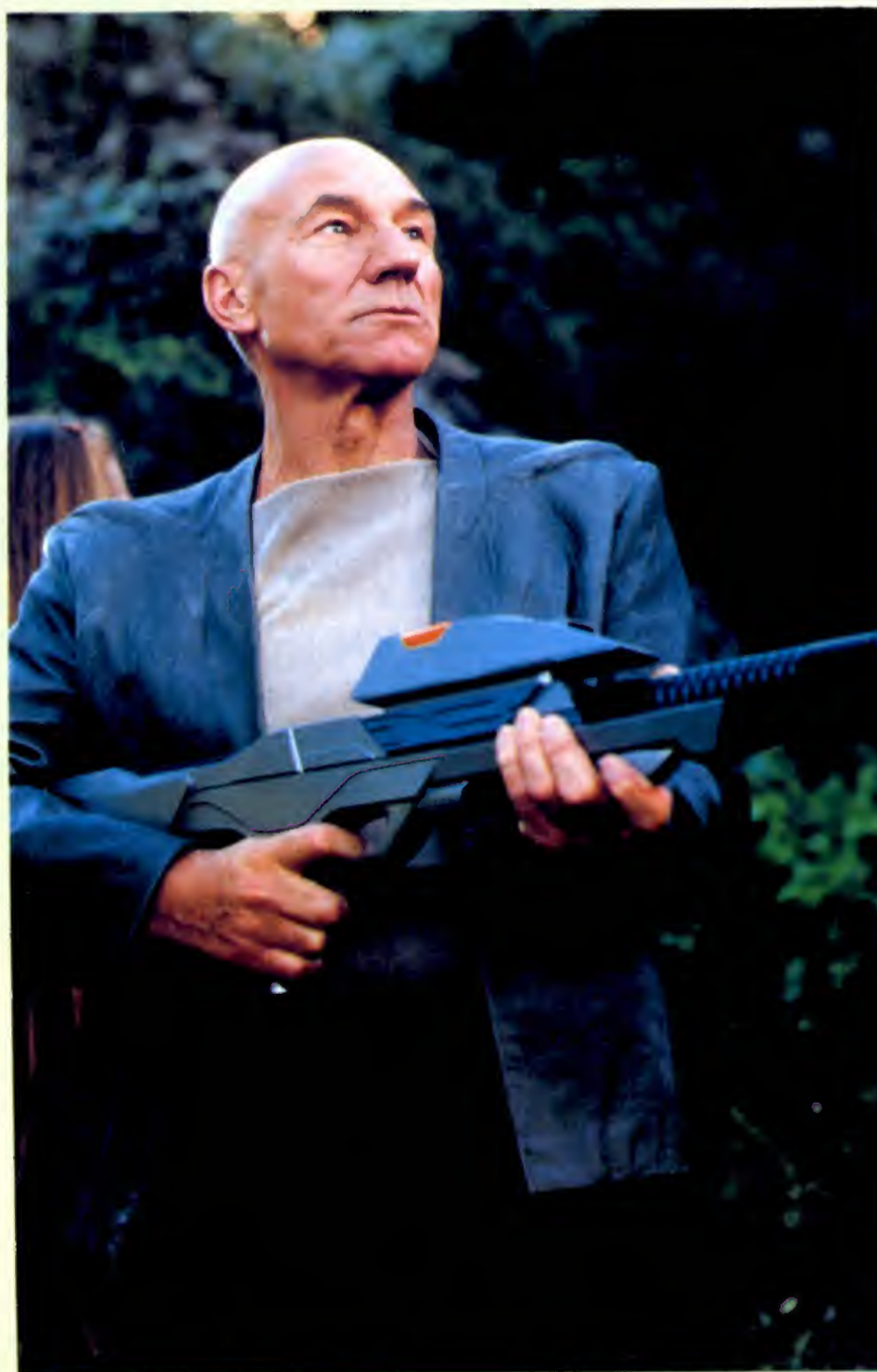


STAR TREK INSURRECTION

Because Picard said "Make it so," the ninth film is a feel-good change of pace.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Holiday season 1998—time for the next STAR TREK movie. The ninth feature film from the TREK franchise, the third with the cast of THE NEXT GENERATION, was finally titled INSURRECTION, after much debate and nine M.P.A.A. registered names. Producers, writers and stars all



Patrick Stewart as Picard, taking a producing credit and steering the series away from taking itself too seriously. Left: The Son'a, a new race of villains.

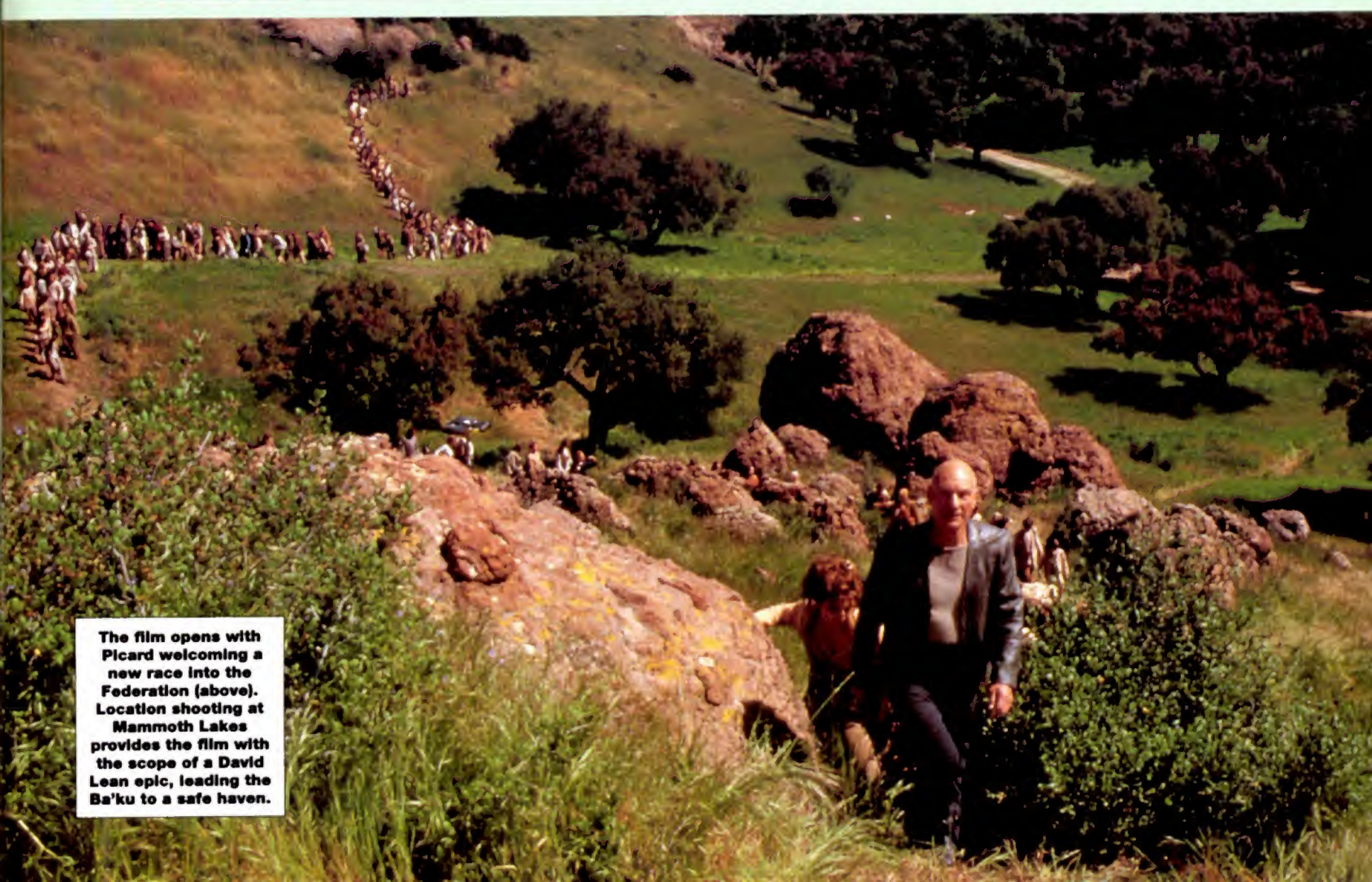


wanted to show the crew of the Enterprise in a different light than the seventh and eighth movies, with less angst and more comedy, demonstrating the strong bond between the characters. Noted star Patrick Stewart, who reprises his role as Captain Picard, "It's quite different from the first two movies. It has a gentle tone, a lot of humor. In feel and tone, it is classic STAR TREK. In theme, it's mainstream STAR TREK."

Added Brent Spiner, who once again as Data plays a prominent role, "I think the purpose in doing a lighter film this time is in not duplicating ourselves." Paramount opens the film nationwide on December 11.

Rick Berman, the keeper of the STAR TREK flame and executive producer of THE NEXT GENERATION, brought Michael Piller back into the fold to co-write the story and pen the script. Explained Piller, "Rick Berman came into my office and said, 'Don't say no until I finish.' He then asked me if I'd be interested in writing the next STAR TREK movie. The reason why he thought I might say no was I have been steadily moving away from STAR TREK over the last two or three years. I had really, except for my continuing consulting role on STAR TREK television, been away from the franchise for a long time. I thought it would be fun to get back in the saddle again."

Piller joined the writing staff of THE NEXT GENERATION in 1989, and became co-executive producer during its fourth season. He was not involved with either of the previous two films featuring THE NEXT GENERATION cast. Mused Piller, "I can tell you, returning to the franchise, that as a writer and as a viewer, I



The film opens with Picard welcoming a new race into the Federation (above). Location shooting at Mammoth Lakes provides the film with the scope of a David Lean epic, leading the Ba'ku to a safe haven.

STAR TREK INSURRECTION

BRENT SPINER

The actor behind Data on making the second TNG feature more fun.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Brent Spiner left the Broadway stage and his role in the musical "1776" to reprise his role as the popular Lieutenant Commander Data for STAR TREK: INSURRECTION. Despite having to leave John Adams behind, Spiner was happy to be reunited with his NEXT GENERATION compatriots. He noted, "I was doing something else and I was enjoying it, but I had to stop doing it so I could come do this. In the final analysis I have had a good time, so it was good coming back. I think it was about time."

Much of the movie was filmed on location, primarily at the Ba'ku village in Southern California, which was hard on Spiner with his android makeup and yellow contact lenses. "For me, location is always harder than being in a studio, particularly in this makeup," he said. "It's nowhere near as convenient. You get made up and then you have to be driven to the set. If something is wrong with the makeup you have to go back to makeup, it's not all right there."

He added about his contact lenses with a smile, "I can tolerate them, but I can't stand them."

In INSURRECTION, Data gets shot, loses his memory, and starts acting strange. Much of the beginning of the film follows Picard and his crew as they try to stop the out-of-control Data. Laughed Spiner, "He gets shot in the neck and he loses his memory, part of it. The writers decide which part he loses. It makes no sense to me. It's STAR TREK. He's got the emotion chip. I think there is one reference to it, maybe, but it's not really active in this particular film."

The audience first sees only Data's head, as he removes the gear that disguises him from

the Ba'ku. Was that strange to do? Spiner replied, "No not really, because I wasn't just a head, I had my whole body. It's an effect. It felt just like normal. I was walking. They are going to take out the rest of my body [digitally]. I had a green suit on, and a bucket on my head. I reveal it by taking the bucket off of my head. It may be that simple."

As Picard and Worf attempt to trigger Data's memory, they sing, very briefly. Said Spiner, "I do get to sing, among others. We sing a piece of Gilbert and Sullivan, from 'H.M.S. Pinafore' I believe. It's just a little bit, really, and it's more plot than actual just singing. [Picard] is trying to access part of my memory that will affect me."

Spiner does not like to judge STAR TREK films. "I'm beyond the point where I judge the material I do as good or bad," he said. "When you do it, you have to believe in it moment by moment. It's really counterproductive if you go, 'I don't believe in this, I don't like it,' so I put that aside. We have a process where we get the scripts, then we go in and give our notes. We win certain battles and we don't win certain battles, and then we start shooting. You just give all of that up because it is counterproductive. I didn't have input in terms of how the story was written. I had input, certainly,

In INSURRECTION, Spiner as Lt. Commander Data and Michael Dorn as Worf are on a scientific survey of the planet of the Ba'ku, filmed in Mammoth Lakes.



Spiner left the role of John Adams in "1776" on Broadway to resume his role as the Enterprise's android. "It was good coming back," he said.

in terms of specifics that I thought were either out of character or in character, things like that."

There was a conscious attempt by everyone involved to make the ninth TREK movie lighter than its predecessor FIRST CONTACT. Is it funny? "It's subjective," said Spiner. "To me it's funny. [That] doesn't mean it's funny to you. But I think there is a lot of attempts at humor. The film is certainly lighter than FIRST CONTACT."

Spiner answered questions about some of the rumors surrounding the shoot. One was about the humor in the movie and certain jokes that some fans considered adolescent. One joke was removed from the battle scene between Picard and Data. "The joke is gone," said Spiner. "That was out before the final script. That joke was lost, but I don't remember anything else."

In addition to his time on Broadway, Spiner appeared as cruise director Gil Godwyn in the comedy feature OUT TO SEA, and got a chance to both sing and dance. He wasn't sure what he would do after finishing INSURRECTION. He said, "I've been working for a year straight without really any time off, so I'm not sure what I am going to do. Maybe I'll take a little break, because I literally haven't had time to even look for anything else." □

was very heavily invested in the qualities of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION and the characters of the show that had made it so special both to watch and to write in the first place. I wanted to bring an appreciation for a different type of hero through Picard. I had always felt that Picard's greatest strength as a hero was that he was a man of intellect and principle, and moral and ethical guidance, and the center of a family that would follow him to the ends of the universe to do the right thing. The writers, Ron Moore and Brannon Braga, had told two sort of atypical stories of Picard in the first two movies, one in which he was self-doubting [GENERATIONS], and one in which he was reacting out of vengeance [FIRST CONTACT]. I wanted to remind, or to introduce for that matter, the feature film audience to the hero that I had fallen in love with. I saw that as one of my primary challenges. I am pleased to say that after a great deal of discussion, and argument, frankly, that I think that goal has been met."

Piller continued, "I knew, and I think Rick felt even before we started, that we wanted to do, for want of a better phrase, a feel-good movie. People would feel better going out of the movie than they did when they were going in, which is frankly unusual these days. I have always felt that this franchise has been based on an optimistic view of the future. It has the capacity to make people feel good, and we should take advantage of that. Rick had said that he really wanted to adapt a classic story and put it into STAR TREK terms. I was saying to myself, 'What do I want to write about? What theme should we explore?' I thought, 'When was the last time somebody did a search for the Fountain of Youth story?' I couldn't think of it. There might have been one, but I just couldn't think of it. The fact that I couldn't think of it was about the best answer that I could give to myself in that situation. I came to Rick the next day with the very earliest

MICHAEL PILLER

"The writers had told two atypical stories of Picard in the first two movies. He was self-doubting or vengeful. I wanted to re-introduce the hero that I had fallen in love with."



Stewart and Donna Murphy as Ba'ku leader Anij in "Shangri-la" courtesy of production designer Herman Zimmerman (inset).



threads of the story."

Piller and Berman's first story attempt followed Picard in a "Heart of Darkness" type journey as he looked for an old friend who had gone native on the planet with the Fountain of Youth. Piller and Berman next substituted Data, instead of the old friend, as the character Picard had to save. They briefly even discarded the Fountain of Youth story and came up with a dark tale of Data gone crazy. This draft was in fact rejected by Patrick Stewart, something which led fans to speculate that the movie was in trouble very early in the process.

Explained Piller, "The idea of Picard going up the river to retrieve Data who has gone berserk is a fascinating story to me. It had nothing to do with the Fountain of Youth, so we ultimately had to discard that part of it, and we went down that road for several weeks. We came up with a story which was quite a bit darker than the one we started out to tell, a story that many people at the studio liked. But when Patrick looked at it, Patrick said, 'It's dark and it's grim, and it is not entertaining enough.' He really didn't

like it.

"Patrick has great instincts, and he certainly has the contractual right as the actor to approve the story. So we, Rick and I, huddled and said, 'What are we going to do to solve Patrick's problems with this?' Patrick really was saying, 'We should show them a different side of us. I want to have fun this time.' I said, 'Look, he wants to have fun. This movie is not fun as it stands. It's very dramatic. The only way we are going to salvage a semblance of what we have been working on for several months is to pitch Patrick the Fountain of Youth idea.'"

Berman's fears that Stewart would not like a movie in which he would have to get younger proved to be unfounded. Stewart loved the idea. So the movie became the story of a planet with rejuvenative Fountain of Youth powers, with a touch of Data going berserk.

The entire cast of THE NEXT GENERATION agreed to reunite for their third feature film. Jonathan Frakes was quickly selected to direct STAR TREK IX, as well as play Commander William T. Riker, just as he had done in FIRST CON-

TACT.

One obvious question for the writer of STAR TREK IX involves Worf, played by Michael Dorn, who is a regular cast member of DEEP SPACE NINE, and got onto the Enterprise in FIRST CONTACT during the battle with the Borg when the Defiant was damaged. At the end of DS9's sixth season, Worf's wife Dax, played by Terry Farrell, had just been killed. The seventh season will be well underway when the movie is released.

When asked how Worf gets onto the Enterprise this time, Piller seemed annoyed, and answered, "Why does everybody care about that? We've got to

get Worf there, and we get him there as quickly and easily and as perfunctory as possible. My first take on it was, when Worf gets there he is still suffering from the loss of his wife. Picard and he have a brief conversation that reconciles the audi-

ence to understanding that we are not ignoring it, but we ultimately took it out. We took it out because we cannot assume that every member of the audience has been watching DEEP SPACE NINE.

"It's not going to play an important part in the movie one way or the other. It would be there for continuity's sake. The problem is, that every time you make a reference to something that came before, that a member of the audience was not part of, there is a resentment. You sit there and you say, 'I don't know anything about that. I got here late.' It's very early in the movie, and Rick and I decided, let's not do this. We don't want people asking each other, 'Who's wife? What happened to his wife?' So we took it out. Ultimately Worf arrives because he happens to be in the vicinity where the Enterprise is stationed at the beginning of the movie, and there is a celebration of a new planet being brought into the Federation that he chooses to come to. It's very simple."

A team of TREK veterans was assembled to work on the movie. Herman Zimmerman

STAR TREK INSURRECTION

F. MURRAY ABRAHAM

The Oscar-winning actor on the joy of becoming a part of science fiction's first franchise.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Academy Award-winning actor F. Murray Abraham, cast in the role of the villainous Ru'afo for the ninth STAR TREK movie, got a surprising introduction to TREK. "My son was so excited when I told him that I was going to be doing STAR TREK," he said. "He told me I was entering into a whole new world that I was not aware of. He said that I was a respected actor, but that I would be in a completely other thing now that I became a STAR TREK personality. I have a strong Italian connection. I am half Italian, and I do at least one



Abraham as Bernardo Gul, the cruel inquisitor of 1986's NAME OF THE ROSE. Left: In makeup as Son'a leader Ru'afo, taking a stab at a STAR TREK heavy.

Abraham laughed about playing the villain of the movie. "That's what I play. It's funny. I'm such a nice man. I really am. I'm the nicest man I know."

There were many physical demands on Abraham as he played Ru'afo, as well as the stunt people. He noted, "There are some stunts in this picture that are really going to open your eyes, I

think. They opened mine. I saw some of the scenes on the video monitor. It was amazing what some of these stunt people can do. They are very tough guys. My double was prepared to do anything in the world, and he did, practically."

The final battle between Picard (Patrick Stewart) and Ru'afo involved an intricate fight staged on the collector assembly. Recalled Abraham, "It was a little bit tough. I won't say

it was dangerous, because we had our stunt doubles ready. But we had to do some work. Patrick Stewart is in very good shape. I am too. But he is in remarkable shape. We did some climbing and running. We were up above the ground a good 35 feet. But everything came out OK."

Then, after being launched into the rings around the planet of the Ba'ku, Ru'afo's aging reverses as he metamorphoses into a young man. Explained the actor, "That was three days hard work, really hard work. I just wish the best for it. It's so elaborate. You know, there's no guarantee. You look at the idea, you examine it, and you know what you have to do. You get up and you do your work, and then all you do is cross your fingers and hope for the best. But they are the best in the world, aren't they? So I guess it's going to be fine. I am not worried about that,

frankly. To accomplish it, they asked me for some photographs of myself over the years, since I was a young, young boy. What they are trying to accomplish, is exactly me going back in time. It's pretty startling."

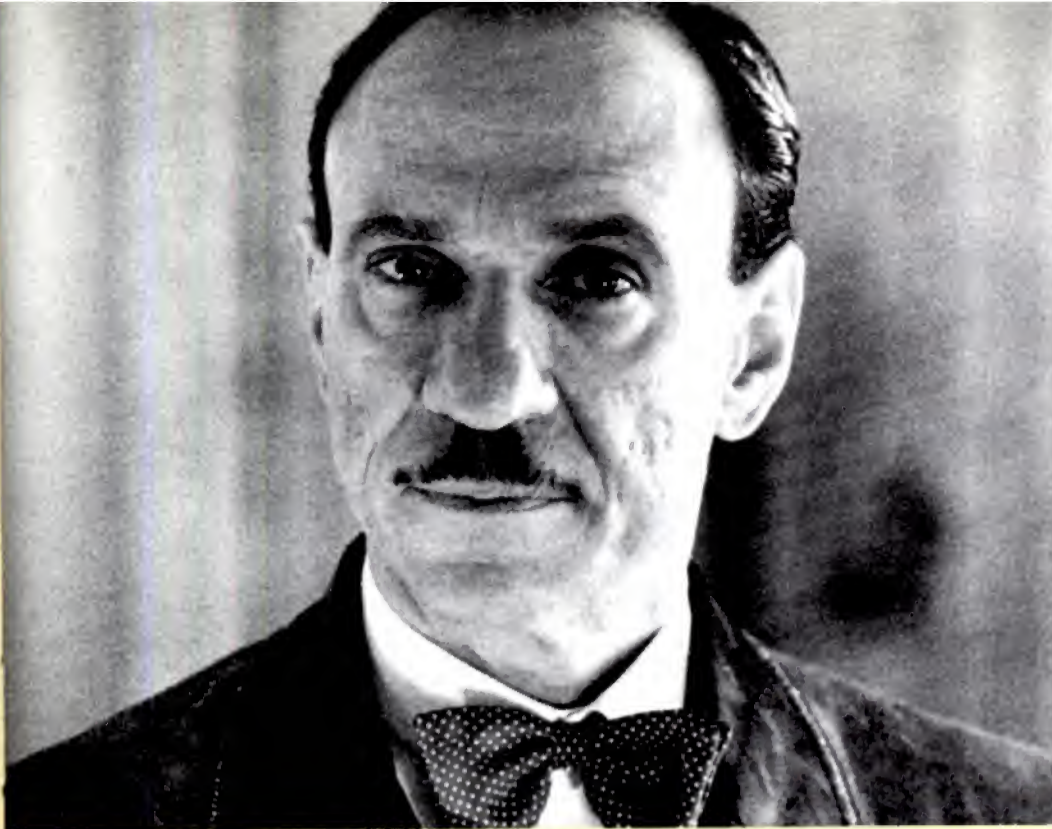
Many of Abraham's scenes included his second-in-command Gallatin (Gregg Henry). Abraham noted, "My right hand, Gallatin, Gregg Henry, is a very good actor."

He also worked closely with Anthony Zerbe, who plays Starfleet Admiral Dougherty. Abraham said, "I must tell you something about myself. I really don't say anything I don't mean. If I don't like someone, I simply don't mention it. Anthony Zerbe and I became instant friends. There's an interesting side note, by the way. It turns out, he sent me a note many years ago, 15 or 20 years ago. We were both doing 'Cyrano [de Bergerac]' in different parts of the country. He sent me a note, a very nice encouraging note when I was doing it. All these years later we worked together on the set, and it was really a good time."

He added, "Cyrano de Bergerac actually lived about four hundred years ago. He lived during the time of D'Artagnan and the three Musketeers. He was not only a great swordsman, but he was a writer. Did you know that he wrote the very first science fiction novel ['Voyages to the Moon,' written in 1656, translated into English in 1923]? Anyway, that was our connection, Anthony and me. We both played Cyrano the



movie a year in Italy. It's like my second home. When I was making my Italian movie this year [CADAVERI ECCELLENTI], I mentioned STAR TREK to them. They just came out of the STAR TREK closet. All of a sudden, so many of these sophisticated international Italians let me know that they had been secret Trekkies all along. It was a great revelation, and rather joyous too, because it's so much fun."



Abraham as gambler Arnold Rothstein in 1991's *MOBSTERS*. Abraham won an Oscar as Antonio Salleri in 1984's *AMADEUS*, making villainy a specialty.

same season."

Abraham is probably best known for his Academy Award-winning performance as Antonio Salieri in the 1984 film *AMADEUS*. Some of his more recent films include *ERUPTION*, *LOOKING FOR RICHARD*, *MIGHTY APHRODITE* and *LAST ACTION HERO*. He appeared in the genre features *MIMIC* as Dr. Gates, and *SLIPSTREAM*, as Cornelius. He played Professor Harlech in the telefilm *JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH*. He noted, "My schedule is such that if I'm not acting, and working either in the theater or on film, I'm teaching here at Brooklyn College."

The actor was about to leave his New York home for Australia, to start on his next movie. "I will be doing a biblical epic, *NOAH*," he said. "Jon Voight plays Noah, and I play his best friend. It's going to be a lot of fun, too. It's just a really good script. Peter Barnes wrote it. He's a very good writer, a great, British writer. He wrote *THE RULING CLASS*. It's going to be a good time. I happen to like Australia very much. I did a film there three years ago with Judy Davis [*CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION*]. My wife and I didn't want to leave."

The actor was both surprised and happy to hear that *STAR TREK* conventions occur in Australia. He was also amazed at the idea that *TREK* villains might appear as action figures, as did Dr. Soran (Malcom Mc-

Dowell) from *GENERATIONS* and the Borg Queen (Alice Krige) from *FIRST CONTACT*. He noted, "I'm already getting letters from Trekkies. I can't believe it. The movie hasn't even been released."

Abraham had a message for *STAR TREK* fans. He said, "The people who are making these movies really care. I think it's important that people understand that they really do care. They are like a family. They have been together for some years now. Sometimes when that happens, that family doesn't let outsiders in. It's closed. Well, this family absolutely opens the door and puts out the welcome mat. I must tell you, I wouldn't say this if it weren't true, if I didn't believe it. They really invite people to have a good time and be part of their family, and I find that very touching. I think that's one of the elements, that makes this world worth living in. The idea that *STAR TREK* means so much to so many people, and at the same time, the people who are making the films are not cynical about it, it's very important that the fans understand that."

He laughed, "I had a good time. I don't want to give away the ending, but in the fight between Picard and me, you can guess who wins. So I'm not going to be doing any more *STAR TREK*, unfortunately. Maybe I'll come back as a very small baby. It would be terrific to be associated with a family like this for a long time. I'm not going to. It's out of the question. I'm going to miss it." □

MICHAEL PILLER

"Donna Murphy and Patrick have a great chemistry. We chose a mature woman, as opposed [to a younger co-star syndrome]. There's a chemistry and maturity people will believe."

was once again the production designer. Ron Wilkinson headed the art department. Makeup wizard Michael Westmore and his team rushed over from *DEEP SPACE NINE* and *VOYAGER* to create the look of the aliens that would be introduced in the course of the story. Matthew Leonetti, who worked with Frakes on *FIRST CONTACT* was selected to be cinematographer. Jerry Goldsmith composed the musical score.

Peter Lauritson co-produced the movie and supervised the visual effects, as he does with the television shows. ILM had done the bulk of the effects for the last two movies. However, with much of their time now devoted to the *STAR WARS* prequel, Rick Berman reportedly decided to look elsewhere and get the "A" teams from a number of other effects companies. Santa Barbara Studios, who did the original *VOYAGER* opening sequence, designed all the computer generated space battles. VIFX/Blue Sky handled the planet-based visual effects, including anything involving the Ba'ku, as well as the Son'a. Almost every visual effect in the film was achieved through CGI.

A stellar group of guest stars joined the production. F. Mur-

ray Abraham, who won an Academy Award for his portrayal of Antonio Salieri in the 1984 film *AMADEUS*, plays the villainous Ru'afo, the head of the Son'a, who wish to steal the Fountain of Youth. Gregg Henry plays Ru'afo's main assistant Gallatin. As Admiral Dougherty, Anthony Zerbe brings years of experience to the role of a Starfleet officer who abandons his principles while helping the Son'a. Two-time Tony Award winner Donna Murphy was cast as Anij, a leader of the Ba'ku, the people who live on the planet with rejuvenative powers. Anij also becomes romantically involved with Picard.

Michael Piller enthused about the guest cast, saying, "F. Murray Abraham is one of the greatest actors who has ever done a *STAR TREK* movie. Donna, who is a great Broadway star, even diva perhaps, and Patrick have a great chemistry on screen. I was not involved with these casting decisions. I was consulted but I wasn't in the room. I think it is very interesting that we chose a woman who is a mature woman, as opposed to a younger more glamorous star. There [was] a big article in the 'Los Angeles Times' about the older actor/younger

Producer Rick Berman (l) and screenwriter Michael Piller ring late *STAR TREK* creator Gene Roddenberry with the cast of *THE NEXT GENERATION* in 1991.



female costar syndrome [in] a variety of pictures. We found who we felt was the best actress and cast her in this role. There's a genuine chemistry and a maturity that is very comfortable and comforting in the relationship between Picard and Anij that I think that people will believe. I think once you believe it, that's all that matters. Then our Admiral is Anthony Zerbe, who is a terrific character actor we don't see enough of. We were just so pleased with his work in the movie, and he dies the most interesting death of all."

Ru'afo, the leader of the Son'a, like the rest of his people has had countless facelifts and other procedures to combat aging. This meant that Abraham spent much of his time under the heavy pieces of latex makeup designed by Michael Westmore. Abraham noted that this, his first experience with a mask, was actually liberating. "I'll tell you something funny about the makeup which maybe not a lot of people understand," he said. "It's a trick that masks have always performed on people, whether they are actors professionally, or amateurs. It gives you a certain sense of freedom that is not matched at any other time, except when you have a mask. It's a great addition, because it opens up a whole avenue of the imagination that for some reason does not exist otherwise. So it's a great plus."

Abraham continued to describe his makeup, saying, "Oddly enough, there is kind of a sexiness about it. That's what I thought, because the eyes work so well. It intensifies the eyes. There was something that we did with a cloak which was compelling. It was pretty remarkable and apparently successful. [The producers] said it looked good, and I am glad of that, because it was a lot of hard work. Wearing lenses, too, is not easy."

Abraham added, laughing, "The funny thing about wearing that makeup is, after you get used to it, after about 20 or 30 minutes, you forget you are wearing it, and when people come to visit the set you can't

F. MURRAY ABRAHAM

"[Makeup] gives you a sense of freedom that is not matched at any other time. It's a great addition, because it opens up a whole avenue of the imagination."



Jonathan Frakes as Commander Riker grows younger and beardless under the effects of the Ba'ku's metaphasic radiation, scrutinized by a curious Data.

understand why they look at you so strangely. Afterwards, when you take it off, and you greet someone, they look at you like you are a complete stranger because they don't know you without your makeup."

There were definitely people on the set, familiar with Abraham's work, who could not recognize him as Ru'afo. In response to this, he said, "I hope that's true. It would be nice to vanish completely. But other people said they absolutely could recognize me. So we will see what happens. I heard both sides. Isn't that a mystery?"

Murphy, Stewart's co-star, was new to STAR TREK. She laughed, "I feel so funny talking about [the galaxy]. It's really big."

Murphy had not been a regular watcher of the TV shows. "I had seen FIRST CONTACT, and once I was cast, rented a bunch of the other films and some of the episodes. In talking to friends of mine, and people who do watch the shows regularly over the years, many of the different shows, I've realized what a sort of huge world it is. It's better for me not to think about that aspect of it, and have

a good time and do the work."

Veteran production designer Herman Zimmerman found himself with an enormous number of challenges in doing the ninth STAR TREK film. He had to create a whole world for the Ba'ku, as well as the look of the space-faring Son'a, among other things. This was a bigger job than FIRST CONTACT, yet Zimmerman felt quite happy with the results.

"I think this film, at least from a production design standpoint, was more of a challenge, and more difficult," he said. "We had 37 sets and locations in FIRST CONTACT, and we had 18 more than that for STAR TREK: INSURRECTION. Many of them were quite elaborate. Certainly the Ba'ku village was a large undertaking. The new Son'a ship interior, and the interior of the science vessel, which we call the injector collector, each one of those would have been the kind of setting that you would create just one of for a major motion picture."

Of paramount importance was the look of the Ba'ku planet and village. The audience had to be completely charmed by this setting. Zimmerman discussed

some of the elements of the culture and its architecture. "We have a script that calls for a race of people that are very spiritually oriented," he said. "The Ba'ku are old and wise, although they seem very young. They have a planet that they inhabit that is like Eden, a green, verdant, temperate climate. We conceived a kind of architecture that was an amalgamation of several kinds of Pacific rim architecture, basically, in an effort to give the flavor of something that is both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. When you try to create something new that is called for in the script, like an entire culture, you have to lean on what is available in reference material to get your creative juices going. We used some reference material from Thailand, from Java, a little bit from Japan, from China. The Polynesian Islands gave us more philosophical ideas than actual design elements."

"The outside and the inside meld together. You don't have windows with glass in them, for instance. Doors don't have locks on them. The people are very technologically aware and capable. They have decided over the centuries not to pursue technology for its own sake, but only to try to coexist with nature in a harmonious way. The architecture, and the set dressings, the environment that we create is to that end, a smooth blending of humanity and nature, a Garden of Eden, a Shangri-La, if you will."

In order to help himself visualize the Ba'ku village, Zimmerman did some philosophical research. "I had some difficulty in the beginning," he recalled. "In the early stages of making creative decisions about what this village should look like, I felt that I needed to, for my own marching orders, create just a page of notes about what the Ba'ku people are like. I picked up a Zen Buddhist book that seemed to have all the right elements, and I condensed some of those into a little treatise that seemed to work for the script, for the kind of people we were trying to create an environment for. I made what would be, say, Picard's report to Starfleet was about his impression of the

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STAR TREK INSURRECTION

DONNA MURPHY

The Broadway actress on playing Captain Picard's inamorata.

By Anna L. Kaplan

On the set of STAR TREK: INSURRECTION, in the Ba'ku village, Donna Murphy lowered her voice when talking about her character Anij and Patrick Stewart's Captain Picard. She confirmed that Anij and Picard become romantically involved during the course of the movie.

At this point, she seemed to be very aware that Stewart was sitting close by. He took note of the conversation and remarked, "I wasn't eavesdropping. I'll just sit right here and read."

After walking to another area of the set, Murphy said, "I can tell you that these two characters, Anij and Picard, are both strong and in certain ways balance each other, in terms of the way their minds work. She stands on equal ground in many ways. Yet he's very heroic and she gets to experience that, I get to experience that. It's been sweet, it's been really, really lovely. He just couldn't be more accessible and fun and sexy and smart, all those things that you would imagine him to be. So it has been delicious. I'm a lucky gal. There is a centeredness and a confidence about him, and yet a soulfulness that is very warm and accessible. That combination is irresistible."

Murphy, dressed in a peasant blouse and earth toned, long, patchwork skirt described Anij, saying, "She is one of the founders of this settlement of these people. In thinking about her backstory, we think of her as a spiritual leader of the community as well. She is a very serene woman in a perilous situation. That's interesting for me, too. I've played women in peril, but they've been much more reactive and less centered than her. Again, that takes me back to their compatibility, Anij and Picard."

The scene Stewart and Murphy were working on, along with Brent Spiner as Data, involved

their discovery of a cloaked ship housing a holographic replica of the Ba'ku village. Picard and Data speculate about the ship as a device to relocate the Ba'ku, but Anij knows more than she will say. Explained Murphy, "She knows why someone would want to move them off this planet. She knows what's extremely attractive, or would be attractive to the offlanders about this planet. It would be of interest to anyone in the galaxy. But she's not yet at a point of trusting these people and their intentions to share that with them. It's a place that she and her people have worked hard to create as a sanctuary and to keep separate, so the threat is huge. I think she has an instinct to trust Picard, but generally their rule is, don't trust any outsiders."

Anij knows that any race might be interested in her planet, with its rejuvenative powers, including the Son'a, who used to be Ba'ku. She noted, "I think the history with the generation of Ba'ku who became Son'a, included some kind of conflict, some kind of confrontation between them. That point of reference loads it up as a possibility that they might return. In terms of the way that we've tracked the story and played it, it's a revelation that happens late in the film."

Murphy enthused about the beautiful set designed by Herman Zimmerman. "It's very Shangri-la. You can see all the influences

Picard ignores the Federation's Prime Directive in order to help Anij, the spiritual leader of her people, who have discovered the secret of eternal youth.



Picard (Patrick Stewart) comes to the aid of Murphy as Anij, leader of the Ba'ku, a race about to be evicted from its idyllic planetary paradise.

that Herman Zimmerman allowed to be a part of it. Some of the architecture looks like photos I've seen of homes in Bali. There is something very Zen about it. It's great. When I first was hired, and I met Herman Zimmerman and looked at a model of the village, he handed me this little sheet of paper that had a kind of concentrated representation of what he thought the Bak'u philosophy was. It was beautiful, and it was very much in sync with some of the research that I have been doing about Zen Buddhism, and things that I thought might be aligned with this way of life. I was so impressed with the thoroughness of his approach, and the big picture, that he had taken the time to do this and shared it with me. He was very poetic in the way he articulated it too. It's all here, if you look around, it's there, in the choices."

Patrick Stewart calls himself "a huge fan" of Donna Murphy, who has won two Tony awards, one for Anna in "The King and I," and the other for Fosca in "Passion." Television viewers would recognize her as Francesca Cross from MURDER ONE, or Marie Hanson from the crossover episodes of ALLY MCBEAL and THE PRACTICE in 1998. She played Mary Todd Lincoln in the telefilm THE DAY LINCOLN WAS SHOT, and guest starred on MICHAEL HAYES, REMEMBER WENN, and NOTHING SACRED. Her feature credits include JADE and the genre film THE ASTRONAUT'S WIFE. □

STAR TREK INSURRECTION

MICHAEL PILLER

The writer/producer who made his mark on series Trek returns to active duty to craft the ninth movie.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Michael Piller was ready to return to active STAR TREK duty in order to co-write the story and pen the script for the franchise's ninth movie, STAR TREK: INSURRECTION. Piller joined the writing staff of TNG during its third season, becoming co-executive producer in year four. He also co-created both DEEP SPACE NINE and VOYAGER, eventually stepping back to take the role of creative consultant to the television series in order to pursue other interests.

"I had been in space for almost ten years, and I felt the need to invest some more time and energy in new challenges," he said. "The reason why I felt ready for [the movie], aside from it being a terrific opportunity, was that I had some success in doing the things I set out to do. I had written a screenplay on spec, a portrait of a modern American man, and it was optioned by Sidney Pollack. I had been working on that for a while. I had written a couple of pilots that I was proud of, that didn't get on the air, but creatively I couldn't have been more pleased. They were not science fiction, very different kinds of things. I had done LEGEND as well, which is a series that did get on the air. None of them were anything like STAR TREK."

Piller added, "I can tell you that after working on, I guess, 130 episodes of THE NEXT GENERATION, I felt very



Piller's first take on the new feature was to reintroduce Picard's old friend, Starfleet Academy groundskeeper Boothby (Ray Walston) from "First Duty."

comfortable and excited to be back with them again. It's like revisiting an old family that you haven't seen for a while. I think it did take me a little while to get the rhythms of the characters."

The writer/producer talked about the development of the story for the movie, about a planet with a Fountain of Youth. "The story started from an idea that I had while I was putting on my Rogaine© one morning," he said, seriously. "The first question I always ask as a writer, no matter what I am doing, is what is this about? What do I want this movie to be about? As I saw myself putting my Rogaine© on, I said, 'When was the last time somebody did a search for the Fountain of Youth story?'"

Piller went to producer Rick Berman with the idea. "What I pitched to him was a 'Heart of Darkness' kind of structure, in

which we meet Picard [Patrick Stewart] as a young man at the Academy, a rebel, almost a malcontent. He's raising hell, he's breaking rules, he's nothing like the man that we know as Jean Luc Picard. He's hanging-out with a good buddy who is just as rowdy as he is. They have a great time, and we see this real love affair."

Laughing, Piller continued, "As a matter of fact, as I recall, I pitched it to Rick as, 'I want to tell a story about a love affair between two men.' In fact, the opening sequence, which would have included Boothby (Ray Walston), the groundskeeper from the Academy that Picard had a very close relationship with, would establish the love affair that Picard had at the Academy with this buddy. Then we cut to the present day of our series franchise, and we find Picard being given a mission by

his superiors to go up the river and get a Colonel Kurtz-type character out of an unknown place. The Colonel Kurtz character is his old friend from the Academy, who has barricaded himself on some planet and is now shooting down Romulan and Federation ships in the Neutral Zone. It's a mystery, trying to figure out why. Picard goes up the river, and he ultimately reaches the planet where this old friend of his is. He finds his old friend looking exactly the same as he did at the Academy. In fact, it is the Fountain of Youth planet. This man is protecting the Fountain of Youth planet from a Romulan-Federation conspiracy to steal it."

Piller added, "That was my first pitch. We worked on that story for about six weeks. I sketched out a very brief draft of it. I shouldn't say brief. It was probably 25 pages long. Rick read it, and he said, 'Patrick's going to hate this. It means that he has to be old at the beginning of the movie, and then get younger as the movie continues. By the time he gets to get the girl and swashbuckle, he's 25 again in this story. He's not going to like that.'"

Then, recalled Piller, "Rick leaned forward and said, 'What would you think if the old friend from the Academy, instead of our Kurtz character, what if Kurtz was Data [Brent Spiner]?' I knew a good idea when I heard it."

So Berman and Piller worked with the idea of Data



Piller confers with Brent Spiner as Data and soundman Alan Bernard during his days as co-executive producer on *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*.

going berserk, and temporarily discarded the Fountain of Youth idea completely. Although Piller liked this story, as did many at the studio, Patrick Stewart did not. Stewart wanted to show the characters having more fun, in a more lighthearted adventure than the one Piller and Berman had written. Piller realized that they needed to return to the Fountain of Youth story. "Patrick had heard the littlest threads of it before he went off to do *MOBY DICK*, and had not responded negatively to it," said Piller. "He was noncommittal. Rick got on the phone with him. He was strapped to the whale at the time, somewhere in Australia. Rick said, 'One of the things that we discarded along the way was this Fountain of Youth idea, this planet creating the Fountain of Youth effect. Everybody gets younger during the course of

the picture.'"

Piller attempted an impression of Stewart. "Patrick said, 'Everyone is interested in the youth culture. The Baby Boomers are growing older.'"

Piller resumed his normal voice, "He went on at length about how exciting an idea that was. I give Patrick the full credit of turning the course of this movie back to what it ultimately became, which I think is essential to the successful nature of it. When Rick said, 'We felt you wouldn't like the idea of getting younger,' he said [Piller returned to the British accent], 'Don't be silly. It's perfectly fine. I have no problem with that at all.'"

Continuing the saga, Piller recalled, "That became the turning point of the script development. We made one disastrous mistake before getting on the right track. We tried to have our

WRITER/PROD. MICHAEL PILLER

"I can tell you that after working on about 130 episodes of *THE NEXT GENERATION*, I felt very comfortable and excited to be back again. It's like revisiting an old family..."

cake and eat it to. We tried to keep everything that we liked about the first story, and everything that we liked about the second story, and we tried to crush them together into a draft of the script that didn't work at all. In fact, the first half of the movie was the trip up the river to find Data, and on page 78 we find Data in a Fountain of Youth environment. Then the second half of the movie is about all these strange things that are happening to us getting younger. It was two different movies. It had enough plot to support two different movies. We had to have a unified vision. We had to stop looking at this as two pieces, and find something that made it all work together. There is no question in my mind that we did. We tore it apart, we constructed it beat by beat again, and came up with a movie that I hope audiences will agree is not just a great *STAR TREK* movie, but a great science fiction movie, and perhaps even a great movie."

Piller added, "It's very likely that I am going to write a book about this experience, just because it has been so interesting. If you saw what we tried to keep from both films, you would understand that originally they were two entirely differ-

ent movies."

In the final screenplay, Picard and company must protect the Ba'ku, who live on the Fountain of Youth planet, from an alliance of the Federation and a group called the Son'a who want to take the planet's rejuvenative radiation for themselves. As the audience eventually learns, the Son'a originally were Ba'ku, who left the planet after a disagreement with their elders. Once off the planet, they began to age normally, and many are dying. The older Ba'ku, in contrast, are getting younger.

"In one version of the story, the Ba'ku were children, and the Son'a were 30 year olds," said Piller. "We got a kick out of thinking that this quest for immortality, instead of being the quest of an old man, would be the quest of young man [*VOYAGER* executive producer] Brannon Braga's age, who saw himself at 30, as beginning to lose his youth and show the signs of the decaying of the skin and the human condition. It was all well and good, but it was hard to grasp. We ultimately decided that we were going to go back to the elderly versus the middle-aged people, probably when we decided that Picard was going to have to have a ro-

Worf (Michael Dorn), transferred from duty aboard *Deep Space Nine*, and Picard (Patrick Stewart) come under fire in a space battle with the Son'a.





Piller, who worked on 130 episodes of *THE NEXT GENERATION*, felt comfortable in expanding the ensemble's character interplay, rekindling the romance between Commander Riker (Jonathan Frakes) and Counselor Troi (Marina Sirtis).

mance with one of the Ba'ku. Inherent in any story like this is the demand for the audience to fall in love with the people that you are trying to protect. One of the ways you do that as a writer is to create relationships with people in the civilization that are meaningful, and the audience empathizes [with] and appreciates. One of them is between Data and a child, and the other one is between Picard and this woman. That made the requirement that the Ba'ku be mature, and that boosted the ages of the Son'a. In terms of making the Son'a the same race as the Ba'ku, that came quite late in our development."

Piller confessed, "I can't give you the exact circumstances at this moment. They are escaping me. I have all my notes from every day of our work, but I can't recall when that happened. I can only tell you that we originally had the Romulans. Nobody had any interest here, studio or otherwise, in doing Romulans. So we created a new race, but for various reasons it was important that this new race have a secret. They came to the Federation having found the secret of this Fountain of Youth, and entered into this relationship with the Federation. I remember sitting there in my chair with Rick, talking as we did every day, about the story. It might be that

we started from the place that they basically claimed the planet as their own. Ultimately I said, 'It would be great if they were coming back and they were in fact the same race.' That became sort of a *STAR TREK* twist that made the resolution that Picard comes up with possible."

With principal photography just about completed, Piller was very happy with the look of the film. He felt that Michael Westmore designed wonderful makeup for the elderly Son'a. He had praise for the entire guest cast. He spoke about Herman Zimmerman's Ba'ku village, located in Southern California, saying, "I asked Herman if I could buy that piece of land and open a *STAR TREK* colony. Apparently it's all made out of papier maché or something so it won't last very long. It's a plastic material made to look like rocks. Herman did a sensational job. If that gets onto film, then we'll be real happy, and I think it will, obviously."

The space battles written by Piller were yet to be realized by Santa Barbara Studios, who planned on creating entirely computer generated sequences. Said Piller, "There are two space battles. One is a very unique dogfight between Picard in one craft, and Data, who has been damaged and malfunctions, in another craft. It should

be really quite spectacular because it is going to be played in the very highest reaches of the planet's atmosphere, which will be entirely different than we see in most of our space battles, but much more realistic. Then there is one massive space battle with the Enterprise and two mammoth Son'a ships that requires what will be hereafter called the Riker maneuver for them to escape."

Piller was even less happy talking about the synopsis of the movie script that found its way onto the Internet in the spring of 1998. "What you see in that synopsis may not give you a heartfelt confidence in a movie that is really, I think, quite special," he said. "There is nothing

worse than reading a badly written, 40 page synopsis of a script. I don't like to read synopses of scripts as a producer. But for people at home to try to read something like that, they will say, 'Oh my God, what the Hell is this? What are they thinking about?'"

For the record, the synopsis seemed to be quite accurate. Anyone who read it can come to a conclusion about how well it was written.

Piller concluded by saying, "Things are winding down on the movie. We are still nitpicking here and there, but that is not taking a great deal of time. We are preparing to go to Germany for a start on a *SHOW-TIME* movie. I am executive producing and collaborated on the story with an old friend and frequent collaborator Bill Dial. It is an action-comedy about an American, a former CIA agent, who has to team-up with his former counterpart in Russia, on an exciting and dangerous mission in Russia. It's sort of *I SPY* for the '90s. It's not a pilot, per se, but it is the first movie in what is hoped to be a franchise of movies about these two characters. If we start shooting it in September, I would assume that springtime is very likely when it would get on cable. The working title is *THE ROMANOFF GAMBIT*, but a title that we are thinking seriously about changing it to is *NEVER DIE YOUNG*." Bill Dial, who has written for *DEEP SPACE NINE* and *VOYAGER*, is currently writer and co-executive producer for the Sci-Fi Channel's *SLIDERS*. □

Le Var Burton as Geordi LaForge attempts to understand Data's breakdown while Picard unravels the mystery of the Ba'ku people Data was studying.



Ba'ku people. It basically said that they lived in the moment, the past is gone, the future is not yet here. The moment is all. That's actually a pretty good way to look at life."

The production designer shared his written expression with Donna Murphy, who plays Anij, when they met. "Donna liked it, and was very kind," said Zimmerman. "She said she based her whole character on it."

In addition to the Son'a and Ba'ku the script called for two additional races, servants of the Son'a. "They were basically created by Michael Westmore and our wardrobe designer," said Zimmerman. "They were dramatically important, but they didn't have any dialogue to speak of. They were more a presence than a fully fleshed-out set of characters. They were incidental rather than instrumental to the story. The makeup was quite lovely, and was really all the detailing that those two races needed."

Enthused scriptwriter Piller, about the complex Son'a makeup work supervised by Michael Westmore, "I am just as delighted as could be with what Westmore has done. F. Murray Abraham has got staples around the side of his head. It's really quite interesting. It reminds me in a way of what they did to Karloff in *THE MUMMY* in the early 1930's, which is one of the great makeup jobs. F. Murray Abraham and the rest of the Son'a have a great look. I give Rick Berman a great deal of credit, too, in forming the vision of what these people should look like."

An added challenge with Ru'afo came at the end of the movie. Explained Westmore, "Ru'afo is going to go through a reversal of his character, all the way from Son'a to a young man, and it's going to be a morph. We have so many stages of makeup, I don't know where they are going to put the morph in, because it takes place so fast, this reversal. There are eight to ten changes of makeup that will all be done in seven seconds. It's basically going to be makeup that we are going to see. It would just be a blend from one to the other, but the blend has to be so fast that it is actually

MICHAEL PILLER

"[Ru'afo's age reversal] is a logical and science fiction extension of old age, of all the terrible things you do to try to make yourself look [good] as your body begins to betray you."



Marina Sirtis as T'Pol and Riker attempt to get information from Starfleet about the Briar Patch, the Ba'ku's region of space with many unusual anomalies.

makeup, as opposed to using the computer like they have done so much in recent movies to literally create the character."

Westmore laughed, "This particular alien is not a fantasy, like a Klingon, or a Ferengi. It's very human looking. In the movie, Ru'afo is moving and talking, and you get to meet him with the cowl on. Then he goes through a face-stretching procedure. A bad, bad facelift as if a doctor in reality went crazy. They've taken plastic surgery to its nightmare heights."

Added Piller, "I just think it is a logical and science fiction extension of old age, of all the terrible things you do to try to make yourself look presentable as your body biologically begins to betray you."

Another makeup challenge in *STAR TREK: IX* involved showing evidence that the Enterprise crew was being rejuvenated. Explained Westmore, "We didn't really get into that like we could have. Patrick could have grown a full wig, and he doesn't. They're not really down [on the planet] that long. Geordi's eyes more or less repair. Michael Dorn gets a pimple on his nose, which real-

ly lasts a long time through the movie. Klingons, when they go through puberty, break out in pimples. So he gets a pimple and gets to wear it."

The ships of the Son'a reflect their materialistic nature. Said Zimmerman, "The Son'a ship is a larger ship than the Enterprise. The bridge of the Son'a ship is an expression of the kind of wealth that the Son'a have amassed for themselves. They don't have great physical health, but they have very materialistic desires, and are very wealth-oriented. There are walls that look like they are made of precious metal, and design elements that look like jewels. The captain's chair is really more of a comfortable, upholstered settee than a command chair. The Son'a are so sophisticated that their computers are on their wrists. Ru'afo (F. Murray Abraham), who is the head of the Son'a tribe, is in complete control of his ship simply by accessing a few codes on his wrist. It's quite an interesting set from a philosophical point of view. The Son'a are control freaks, and

the bridge expresses that."

The Son'a science vessel, with the assembly for collecting metaphasic radiation, posed special problems. Noted Zimmerman, "The science vessel is probably ten miles long, an enormous ship designed to collect the metaphasic particles that form the rings around this planet that the Ba'ku inhabit. The science vessel has some sails which open up, and the sails are to collect the metaphasic particles. We built a set on stage 15, which is the largest stage at Paramount. The set was 55 feet high and approximately 48 feet around, and consisted of four levels of steel which reminds you, more than anything else, of a futuristic jungle gym. It's the environment in which the final battle of the picture takes place. That fairly large set represents maybe a thousandth of the size of the total ship that will be seen on the screen. Our injector collector set, on stage, seems to hover over this enormous cavity, and gives Picard and Ru'afo, who are climbing around on this jungle gym of a set, the jeopardy of falling into it during their encounter. None of that could be done effectively without creating a model, and putting our heroes into it, [with] the CGI open space beneath it. The scale of this movie is obviously quite large."

Zimmerman talked about the big space battle involving the Enterprise and the Son'a. He noted, "Picard is down on the planet helping to save the Ba'ku people from the Son'a's attacks. In space, the Enterprise commanded by Riker, [does] battle with two enormous, Son'a battleships. Only with supreme luck and intelligence is he able to defeat them. We've created an environment in space called the 'Briar Patch' full of nebulous gases and dangerous stuff that has to be negotiated, in which this battle has to occur. We are doing, for the first time, an entire movie on computer graphics. We still build models, but instead of photographing them with motion control cameras, we've literally scanned them and used those images, manipulated them with a computer to create the graphic effects. It takes a lot longer, but we are all very ex-

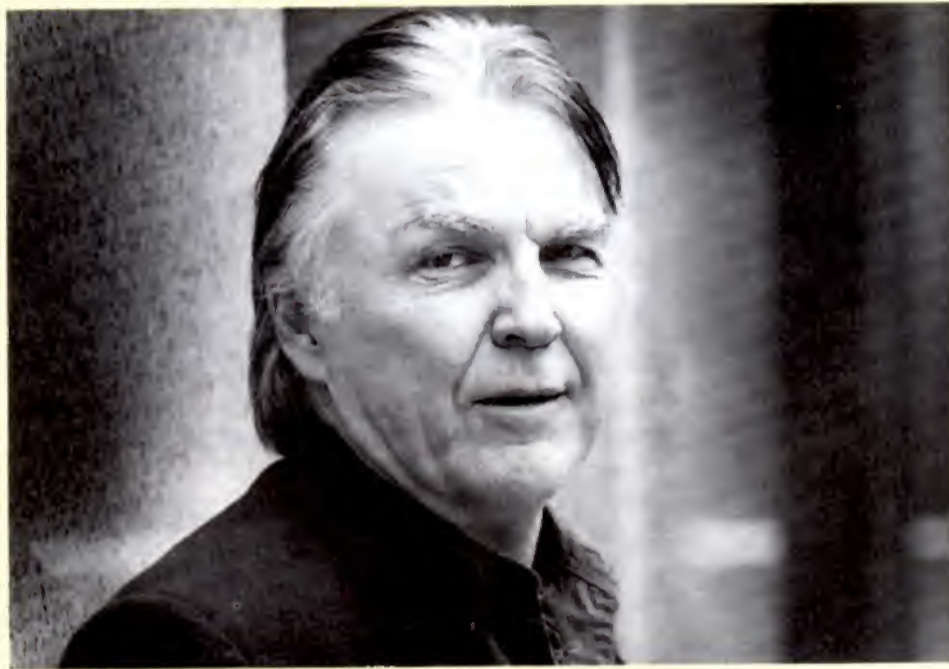
STAR TREK INSURRECTION

ANTHONY ZERBE

One of the movies' top character actors on getting a Trek education, playing a Starfleet Admiral.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Actor Anthony Zerbe reported to the set of *INSURRECTION* without doing all his homework and lacking familiarity with *STAR TREK*. Zerbe is a well-known character actor who has appeared regularly in television and movies since the late 1950's. He recalled, "I was painfully innocent, or naive about it. As a matter of fact, one of my first lines was about Commander Data [pronounced Day-ta], and so when we had the reading, I said, 'Commander Data [as in Dat-a]. We can't find Commander Dat-a.' Thirty heads turned to me in unison



Zerbe, a feet-on-the-ground type whose stint as Starfleet Admiral Dougherty (left) provided him a more cosmic perspective. "It all gets very, very real."

I'm still a forest, trees, and ocean guy. When you dress up in this stuff and you are looking around at it, if you turn your back to the camera, it gets all very, very real. It's amazing how you acclimate to that. I really did have the sense this is how it's going to be. This is what people are going to be doing. Why not? You are standing there, and you

are seeing stars move outside the ship. You are talking to people that look like other creatures. The makeup is astonishing. You can't see a line. You can't see where makeup stops and the face begins, so when you are looking at their eyes, they are these creatures. They are amazing, and they are there talking to you. When your back is to the camera, you are there. When you face the camera, you see a camera with a lot of people behind it.

That brings you back to the anchor of this reality."

Zerbe plays Starfleet Admiral Dougherty, a man who is overseeing a very questionable operation, by allying with the Son'a. He truly believes that they will be able to harvest the metaphasic radiation in the rings around the Ba'ku planet, and thereby make miraculous cures available to everyone in the Federation. He is not concerned about the 600 Ba'ku on the planet, thinking it morally acceptable to relocate them without telling them. The actor stated, "I like Admiral Dougherty. I think that, even though it is not fashionable for the end to justify the means, it certainly is the way life works sometimes, thankfully. This radiation will create an entire new medicine. Millions of people will be affected by it. It's like penicillin, the advent of something like that. Where do you draw the moral line to stand in

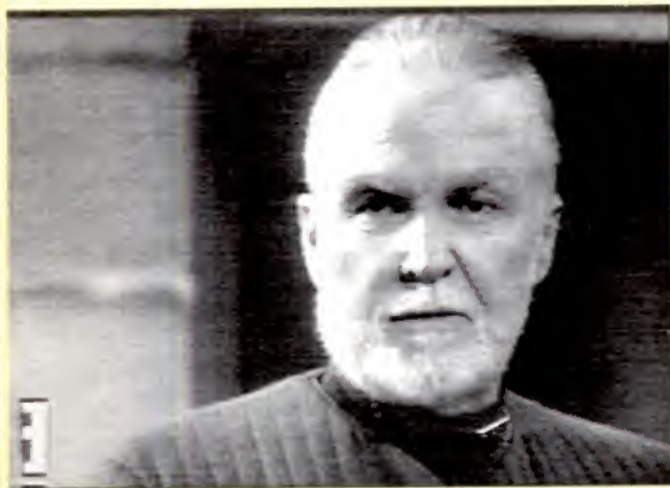
the way of that? It's a tough dilemma. Romantically I have one feeling, but realistically, there may be another one.

"The Ba'ku, who live there, have reversed their aging. They are now perennial. We take them off the planet in order to capture the radiation, which is the only way we know how to do it. Dougherty says, 'This has nothing to do with the [Prime] Directive. These people did not originate here. We are not going to end their lives.' They will come back into a normal life cycle. That's the jeopardy. But this radiation will be available to the rest of the universe. That's where the argument is."

Zerbe chuckled, "Fortunately for me, I never really have to deal with those things. That's why I like this sort of vague reality I live in."

In the film, the Son'a, led by Ru'afo (F. Murray Abraham), have a different agenda than the Federation, which Dougherty does not seem to realize. Noted Zerbe, "The Son'a have other ideas. All you have to do is take a real good look at F. Murray Abraham, and you know the Son'a have other ideas. I'm from the Federation, and there is some judicious movement we have to do. We are trying to take these people off so they are not going to get killed, but unbeknownst to them. That's the trouble, and the stalwart Captain Jean Luc Picard [Patrick Stewart] comes in."

Many of Dougherty's scenes are with Ru'afo. It was the first chance Zerbe and Abraham ever had to work together, although they knew of each other. Zerbe recalled the time when both ac-



and said to me 'Day-ta.' I was chagrined. I learned how to pronounce it quickly. They sent me the two prior films, and I studied the script. The guys that wrote it made themselves available to me, just to come into whatever it is, the 25th [sic] century."

The actor continued, "You really get there, too. That was the interesting thing. I've never been that interested in space. My generation was still earthbound. My son's generation is cosmic, but



Zerbe's only previous brush with science fiction came in 1971 as Matthias, the leader of a devastated future world ruled by vampires in *THE OMEGA MAN*.

tors played the title character in *Cyrano de Bergerac* on stage. "Mine was in Connecticut, and his was in Baltimore. I opened before he did. He was in rehearsal when I opened. I wrote him a letter and said, 'Don't worry. Wherever you are now, it seems impossible, but it's not. It's going to be great.' I met him on the street in New York about eight years ago. We talked, and we stopped traffic."

He continued, "This is the first time we worked together. We had a ball. We had a great time. We are both basically from the stage, even though we make our living in film. [We have] a lot of love of the theater, same with Patrick. There was a lot of that going around."

Zerbe compared his experience with the Bond franchise and *STAR TREK*, saying, "It's a very classy group of people. It reminded me a lot of the Bond picture. It was such a pleasure. Jonathan Frakes is just a sheer joy to work with. Patrick and F. Murray are just wonderful actors. Everything is classy about it, down to the bananas in the fruit basket in my dressing room, on the first day. Rick Berman is the guy who oversees it all, and he just knows. It's one of these comfortable things, like the Bond thing. It's fun. It's like the other side of making movies."

The actor explained that his character's death in *INSURRECTION* was similar to Krest's demise in *LICENSE TO KILL*, despite the fact that the circumstances were so unusual. He explained, "In this my face

gets stretched, and torn. It's stretched apart. [In the] *BOND* picture I died practically the same way, as a matter of fact. My head actually blew up. I was in a compression chamber and they cut the hose and my head just burst."

Dougherty's end in the facelift chamber will be achieved blending CG images and footage of the actor. He said, "I saw the space in which it would take place. I saw where I was going to die. They wanted me to scream all through that, which I did. They took a lot of still photographs."

When Zerbe returned to do some dubbing, he got a chance to view footage of the film. He enthused, "Patrick looks so good. He's got this great voice, he's intelligent and articulate. People would go anywhere with this guy. He looks great, and he's reasoned and everything. [Our characters] just have this slight moral dilemma. Otherwise we'd go fishing together."

He added, "F. Murray's makeup on film looks fabulous. When we were there, I didn't quite get how it was going to look. These guys are so good that what you see is going to be more luxurious when you see it on film, like I saw when I did some dubbing. They know exactly what they are doing, the designers and the cinematographer, exactly what they are doing. They know exactly who they are making the film for. It sure had a great feeling to it. I'd bet on it. I don't think [the fans] are going to be disappointed." □

MICHAEL PILLER

"No one had any enthusiasm for making the Romulans the enemy, including the studio. They felt they were never well-liked villains and we should create something new."

cited about what it is going to look like."

Motion control photography was employed in the making of *INSURRECTION* to help achieve the "perfect moment" which Picard learns from Anij. "The motion control in the film is being done with the actors," said Zimmerman. "We are repeating the motions so that we can get certain visual effects which affect the actor, basically slowing down time, to create this perfect moment. It's time being slowed down for you personally. It's the excitement that this generates that is going to be pleasing to the audience, the fact that you can hold onto a moment for longer than a moment. We had a lot of choices of complicated ways to do it, and we chose the simplest way, in the long run, because it was the one that worked."

"This occurs about three times in the film. The first time, it's done with great precision, and it takes a good bit of screen time to tell what is happening. Then the audience knows what to expect, and the next couple of times it happens, it's a reprise rather than a re-creation, to keep the story moving. Those moments will be high points in the script. The thing that rein-

forces this, of course, will be the music. Jerry Goldsmith is doing the score, and he's a brilliant composer. We are expecting all of those moments to be heightened with the musical score."

Zimmerman spoke about the ninth *STAR TREK* film in August, as visual effects were being finished and the score added. At this point the name of the film was *INSURRECTION*. Zimmerman laughed about the many name changes, saying about the title, "It is to the best of my knowledge, *INSURRECTION*. Mr. Berman could give you the definite, probable on that."

He added, "I am very happy about the film. I talked to Jonathan Frakes, and he seemed to be of the opinion that this movie is as good or better than *FIRST CONTACT*. Rick Berman later that same day confirmed it. I am anxious to see it myself. But we have a lot of optical work to do still. I am sure they will need every bit of time they have between now and the December opening."

From the earliest stages, fan speculation about the ninth movie ran rampant. The Internet is always filled with *STAR TREK* information, speculation, and even hysteria. There are

Jonathan Frakes clowns while filming *THE NEXT GENERATION*. Now turned director, Frakes kept up a mood of camaraderie and good fun on his movie set.



countless unofficial web pages, as well as many different news-groups devoted to things TREK. Rumors started about STAR TREK IX even before FIRST CONTACT hit the theaters. While much of the information found on the Internet and in print was incorrect, some of the time there was at least a tiny nugget of something true that started the rumor mill going.

For example, would Q (John de Lancie) be in the movie? Jonathan Frakes said during the filming of FIRST CONTACT, "I wish he was in this movie. Maybe the next one we'll see Q." However, it does not appear that there were ever any real plans to bring de Lancie's character into the feature.

Early rumor mongers passed on the information that the enemy in the ninth film would be the Romulans. At one time, this was considered by Berman and Piller. Piller noted that no one had any enthusiasm for the Romulans, including the studio. He said, "They felt they were never well-liked villains, and that we should create something new and different."

They created the Son'a. Next circulated was the story of the "Heart of Darkness" plot that Patrick Stewart rejected. According to Piller, Stewart did just that. Fans began to speculate that there was trouble in STAR TREK paradise. By the time shooting started, a synopsis was already on the Internet. Michael Piller said unhappily, "Apparently the script is for sale on the streets of New York."

Everyone involved with the production went to great lengths to maintain secrecy, strictly limiting access to sets, cast and crew. There were some delays, in part attributable to the fact that the Ba'ku village set was constructed near Lake Sherwood, in Southern California, during an El Niño year with its heavy rain. Shooting days were lost because of weather. Rumors persisted, though, that there was tension between Berman and Frakes, that the movie was in trouble, that the visual effects would not be up to snuff, that the humor was adolescent, and that disagreements were going on over cameo appearances by other

BRENT SPINER

"Those are the kind of rumors [about discord on the set] that you read on the Internet. Whenever I've read about what's going on, it's wrong. It's always made up."



Dr. Crusher checks Geordi's eyes when he regains his sight, a result of the Ba'ku's metaphasic Fountain of Youth which begins to affect the Enterprise.

TREK personalities. Armin Shimerman as Quark coming in at the end of the movie seemed to be a particularly controversial moment. For every vehement statement about problems that could be found on the 'Net, there was an equally strong, supportive comment saying that everything was going great. In some ways, the Internet postings were more favorable than blurbs in print media, which inevitably invoked the STAR TREK odd-even curse and predicted doom for film number nine.



On one sunny day on the set in June, everyone seemed to be in the best of spirits as Stewart, Murphy, and Spiner filmed scenes inside the holographic village, which were shot on the actual Ba'ku set. Director Frakes was full of his usual bonhomie, and jokes flew back and forth between him and Stewart. While Stewart was being interviewed, Frakes playfully made up his own questions, suggesting that Stewart answer these. "How do you find working with Jonathan? I

know that you have been working together for many years. Is it easier or harder now?" Frakes laughed.

Frakes also wanted to know if the interviewer was writing everything down. "Did you get that?" he asked repeatedly, after someone made a mistake or told a joke.

Stewart was also playful and relaxed. If there was anger or unhappiness on the set of the movie, it was very well hidden.

Spiner, suffering with his makeup, still said, "It hasn't been difficult. There was no difficulty. We were delayed two days, I think, if that's a delay. We are on schedule. I don't think we are over budget. I am having a good time. That's the idea, basically."

The actor shared his feelings about the gossip of discord on the set, saying, "You know what? Those are the kind of rumors that you read on the Internet. What you read on the Internet is always incorrect, unless they print the script, and then that's correct. Whenever I've been on the Internet before we have done a film, and I have read about what's going on, it's wrong. It's always made up. I

have almost one hundred percent found it incorrect when somebody says, 'I know what's happening in the film,' or 'I know what's going on behind the scenes.' The Internet is a place for people to fulfill their fantasies one way or another. I think some people enjoy feeling like they are on the inside, and knowing full well that they are not, and that people are going to read it and believe it. It's fun for them."

F. Murray Abraham seemed positively overjoyed to be working on STAR TREK. "I don't know how to explain it. I'm a very easy man, I really enjoy my work and I really have a good time. But this set in particular, this STAR TREK set was more fun than I have had in my entire career on a movie set, in 35 years. Isn't that amazing?"

When asked if there was friction on the set, veteran actor Anthony Zerbe was astonished. He said, "What? On the STAR TREK set? Not the period of time I was there. It's just total fun. I can't imagine that. Jonathan would not countenance that, nor would Patrick. As far as I am concerned, it was a joy. It was evident every day. There are a lot of people committed to this. [There was] a lot of hard work on everybody's part."

Writer Piller said about his script, and the movie, "People who have read the script say that it reminds them a lot of the tone from STAR TREK IV [THE VOYAGE HOME]. I think that our goal has been all along to find the warmth and the humor of that movie. At the same time I think the audiences will cheer. There [are] epic, David Lean-like qualities to the situation, and the usual excitement in space with remarkable new space hardware and technology coming into play. People who have read it said that tears came into their eyes at certain moments, and they laughed out loud. I don't think you can ask for much more."

Finally, what does Piller think of the odd-even STAR TREK curse, and its relevance to the ninth TREK movie? He answered, "We don't talk about it. I'm aware of it, but I have had very good luck with nines in my life." □

STAR TREK INSURRECTION

MAKEUP DESIGN

*Michael Westmore on
creating the Son'a.*

By Anna L. Kaplan

Award-winning STAR TREK veteran Michael Westmore found challenging work once again on a TREK feature film. He was responsible for the look of the Son'a, the villains of STAR TREK: IX, whose appearance was a carefully guarded secret. The Son'a are in fact very old humanoids who use surgery to try and maintain a less than ancient appearance. Westmore used the description in Michael Piller's screenplay as a springboard.

"With the Son'a, the script gave us a description of a bad facelift, and the skin stretched very tight across the face," said Westmore. "We delved into that right away, doing prototypes and trying things. You'll see on a character like Ru'afu [F. Murray Abraham], what wound up working the best was making individual [rubber] pieces. They are all applied, overlapping individually. There are scenes in the movie where he stretches his face, and these thin pieces of rubber stretch like rubber bands. We don't have to worry about the makeup with the other Son'a when they have their cowls on. But when they have their headdresses off, and the head is totally bald, then it became very important to be able get a lot of stretchability out of the foam. The other Son'a have cowls on, except in the Son'a facelift salon. The cowls are off, and you see a lot of people that are in the chairs. There's a tooth that's implanted in a man, and a woman [with] half her face done. They are working on the other half of her face, so we had little

stages of operations going on."

Noted Westmore, "We have done overlapping makeup pieces before, but so they all blend in with each other to create a single look. But with this, that's not what we wanted. We wanted the face to look like these areas were stretching really tight. Since the material was latex, there was tension put on the pieces that literally did pull the skin and pull the eyes."

Westmore added, "In all the years I've been in the business, it's the first time that this type of thing has come up. This was something that was really different. We had to do some research and development to work out what looked the best, what worked. I had about ten different sculptors all do their version of what they thought a stretched face was like. Rick Berman, the producer, went through them and said, 'This is what I am looking for.' Then [we went] back to the drawing board to do it again."

At what seemed like the last



Westmore at work on aliens for DEEP SPACE NINE, supervising the makeup designs of both Trek television series as well as the latest feature film.

minute, Westmore was given additional work. The studio felt that the Son'a needed to be shown with other aliens that they had conquered. Westmore had to design the new races. He explained, "The Son'a were going to be our main [work] all the way through. Then they came up with the idea of wanting to throw in two other humanoid races that could be mercenaries, to be with the Son'a. One race has almost a dinosaur, lizard-type of a head, but the faces are all normal. It blends in beautifully. Then there is another race that actually has a wig, and a nose tip, along with a high forehead. Each race has its own distinctiveness. In the reception scene early in the movie, there is another little race. We used very short people. They were not quite five foot tall. They have different heads, and a little nose piece on. They almost look a little 'froggy,' with long ears. It's always a challenge, because whether I used these characters for the film or the television

shows, this is their place in STAR TREK history."

Westmore knows more than anyone else about creating alien races for STAR TREK, having been makeup supervisor for THE NEXT GENERATION, DEEP SPACE NINE, and VOYAGER, as well as FIRST CONTACT. He was the recipient of multiple Emmy awards for this work, as well as an Oscar for MASK. He mused, "With STAR TREK, I've got so many rooms of molds, I didn't realize how much plaster we have run. It literally comes out to tons of molds, and thousands of characters. With this one little character at the reception, we did a principal character, and then we put seven sidekicks with her. With the lizard people, we had four girls in lizard heads. Then they decided to put four guys in lizard heads, so it's eight of those, and the same thing with the other humanoid race. I don't think there is any other television show or feature anywhere that has turned out the literally massive quantity of Latex and plaster that we have. Someday I am going to sit down and dig out all my old records and figure it out."

He added hopefully, "It will be interesting if I can use [the new aliens] on DEEP SPACE NINE. I don't know why I couldn't, because they are all in the Alpha Quadrant. There could be a point after the movie comes out where I could use them on the Promenade on DEEP SPACE NINE. Every time those days come around, it's, 'What haven't we used in the last couple of weeks? What can we use now?'" □

Westmore in his workshop at Paramount, with the dummy head of Data he created for the fifth season of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION.



STAR TREK INSURRECTION

NUMBER ONE DIRECTOR

Jonathan Frakes on directing his second Trek feature and playing Riker.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Jonathan Frakes enjoys his life. He was happy to be picked to direct the ninth STAR TREK feature film, INSURRECTION, after his success with FIRST CONTACT. He took some time out from reviewing visual effects shots to talk about the movie. He enthused, "Life is wild right now. It's great."

Frakes described INSURRECTION, saying, "It's wonderful, better than the last one. It's a whole different gestalt than FIRST CONTACT, much [more] lush, more romantic, still with the wonderful action that the Trekkers have come to live for. I'm very excited about the movie. I think it's in great shape, very different, and yet has all the right STAR TREK elements. It speaks to our time, even though it's in the 24th century. It has the moral, ethical and philosophical strength, with Patrick touting the virtues of the Prime Directive and standing up for the little guy. It has great romance, great sweeping vistas, and action sequences. I'm really happy. I hope the audience is as happy as I am."

Once again, Frakes does double duty in the film, both directing and appearing as Commander Riker, Number One, or as Frakes calls him, "Wild Bill Riker." This time, he was brought into the process as Michael Piller was working on an early version of the script. Recalled Frakes, "I came on board when there was a script called STARDUST that opened



Once again Frakes does double duty, directing and appearing as Commander Riker, engaging in a romance with Trol.

at Starfleet Academy. I was in earlier than I was last time.

"I think the script is wonderful, the way it plays. I got more and more impressed with Piller as the work went on. He's a very talented writer. He has a great sense of structure," Frakes added, and then commented on a subject that has been a target of Internet speculation. "What surprised me, pleasantly, was how well the humor plays that he put in the script. One of the charms of FIRST CONTACT was the comedy that was peppered through it. This movie has the same type of lightness that I always liked in the original STAR TREK. We've got our own version of it."

Frakes would not give the

budget for INSURRECTION, which has been reported at around \$70 million, much more than FIRST CONTACT's \$45 million price tag. Why couldn't he say? Frakes answered, "I don't know why I can't, but they begged that I don't. But I'll tell you where we are, right on the money. It didn't go over."

Fans have wondered about the visual effects for the movie, split-up between Santa Barbara Studios, which is creating the space battles, and VIFX/Blue Sky working on the planet-based shots. Explained Frakes, "Both companies are working out fine. There are, I think at last count, 288 visual effects shots. Some of them are done, and fabulous, and some of them are still in very rough, animatic stage. We spend most of our day approving, disapproving, and giving notes on visual effects shots. VIFX/Blue Sky is doing the palm pet, and the holographic ship, and the altered reality."

What about that altered reality moment? Does it work? Frakes answered, "I think it worked without all the bells and whistles, just because Patrick [Stewart] and Donna [Murphy] are so wonderful in it. I said it right on the day that we shot it, 'If all else fails, the acting is telling the story.' Fortunately we don't have to just count on that. I think it's lovely, with the hummingbird, and the shafts of light flowing down. Between that and Jerry Goldsmith's score which will swell under it, it should be a heart-stopper. We



Fast friends: Brent Spiner as Data and Michael Welch as Artim.

did a temp mix to show the studio, and they loved it."

Frakes spoke about some of the challenges he faced directing INSURRECTION with its large cast and multiple location shoots. He recalled, "We were not in the controlled environment of the Enterprise as we often are. We were outside for half the shoot. We were dodging El Niño. We shot a lot at night, so we had limited hours. We had hundreds of extras and llamas, and traveled to the top of a mountain with no access except by helicopter on one of our locations, so that was an exciting challenge. The whole team was up there, plus half the Ba'ku village. To everybody's credit, it worked. It was well organized. I think that the producers and the A.D.'s deserve some credit for that, because we didn't lose a beat."

Frakes laughed about the area's inaccessibility. "There was no way to get there, unless you left an hour early and walked up this path that was only friendly to mules. I walked down. I walked up when we scouted the location and I thought, 'This sucks.' I'm glad we have helicopters. We were very cavalier. 'We'll all get up there early and walk.' 'Don't worry, I'm going to walk up.'



Frakes is particularly fond of the character interplay of the Data/Artim subplot and the performance of Welch. "I discovered a new movie star," he said.

As the week went on, more and more people said, 'It's only a short ride.' They could only take four people in the helicopter at a time. It was a constant shuttle."

What was captured on film was the exodus of Ba'ku, sweeping vistas of people climbing up the mountains above the Mammoth Lakes area in California. Said Frakes, "Isn't that spectacular? I'm glad we got out. It's a totally different look for a STAR TREK movie."

The director said about his guest cast, "I was afraid after how well we did with [James] Cromwell, Alfre [Woodard], and Alice [Krige], that we'd have trouble matching [FIRST CONTACT]. If anything, we did even better. F. Murray Abraham [Ru'afo] we know is going to be great. He's F. Murray Abraham. Murray had a ball. He's fabulous in the movie. I think he's as good a villain as we've ever had in the franchise. But Donna Murphy [Anij] hasn't done much work on film. I'd seen her on stage. She was fabulous. She and Patrick have great chemistry, so the romance is hot and heavy. [Anthony] Zerbe [Admiral Dougherty] is, in many ways, a more conniving villain than

Murray's character. He is a wonderful actor. Those are the three. I feel like I discovered a new movie star, Michael Welch, the little boy [Artim]. Since then, he's gone off and done a pilot. Then he starred with Ian McKellan in 'Enemy of the People' down at the Ahmanson [Theater]. He hasn't stopped working since he got this job."

Michael Welch, as Artim, plays a character that develops a relationship with Data [Brent Spiner]. Frakes explained, "That's a wonderful arc, that Data/little boy [arc]. There's the big story, and then you've got Data and the boy, and you've got Troi [Marina Sirtis] and

Frakes behind-the-camera, filming on the Son'a flagship, having the time of his life.



DIRECTOR JONATHAN FRAKES

"I'm very excited about the movie. I think it's in great shape, very different and yet has all the right STAR TREK elements. It speaks to our time even though it's in the 24th century."

Riker. There's a lot going on."

Troi and Riker getting back together will surely please fans of THE NEXT GENERATION, "Especially when they see them in the bathtub together," laughed Frakes.

He continued, "I'm glad that we're finally re-investigating that relationship. I think that Marina is glad too, as are Riker and Troi. We have a long and storied relationship on and off camera. So it was great to be back in scenes with Marina, who is fabulous. She's a wonderful comedienne. She does romantic comedy as well as anybody in the cast."

Frakes would not say much about cameo appearances in this movie, as opposed to FIRST CONTACT which featured many familiar TREK faces. He did say, "There's somebody from one of the morning talk shows in Italy and also [somebody from] Spain. We were told to put them in the movie, and they are in the movie. One is Starfleet up in the duck blind and one is Ba'ku in the cave. I think what they are trying to do is pump up how STAR TREK does in Europe. Each movie has done consistently better, but it's not a kick-ass, slam-dunk the way a Schwarzenegger movie or a Bruce Willis movie is in Europe. We are hoping that we

can increase our European viewership."

Rumor has it that a scene featuring Armin Shimerman as Quark was cut out of the film. Shimerman definitely did about a day's work on the film. Was there a cameo cut out? Answered Frakes after a pause, "I've heard that rumor."

He continued, "I don't think we have any other cool cameos. There is a subtle STAR TREK cameo in the library, that the real hard-core Trekkers will appreciate."

All the guest stars enjoyed their visit to the STAR TREK world. Frakes noted, "A lot of Trekkers come out of the closet when they find out their friends are working on the show. It happens all the time with these prestigious actors. They come in and say, 'This is the first show that I've ever worked on, anywhere, where my kids even care what I did for a living,' or, 'My grandkids are thrilled. I finally got a job with something that they care about.' It happens all the time. It happened on the TV show. In both movies that I've directed, people just come out of the woodwork, which is great for us."

As work finishes on INSURRECTION, Frakes will be staying busy with other projects. He said, "I sold a pilot to Fox, called ROSWELL HIGH, that is being written as we speak. I'm hoping that TOTAL RECALL 2 comes to pass, if Mr. Schwarzenegger decides that he can fit it into his schedule, and he approves the script. I've got a movie-of-the-week on UPN that I am going to produce. I am reading an Eddie Murphy script. I have a show called BEYOND BELIEF on Fox which I have a ball doing. I just did that yesterday. I've got two kids now, four, and one-and-a-half. What a blast. My life is good." □

M I G

A masterpiece

By Gordon Warren


Where can a 5000-pound gorilla sit? At the top of a Christmas blockbuster when his movie opens. Walt Disney's **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG** is a sensational example of how good a fantasy film can be—a modern masterpiece with an incredibly lovable lead character, who just happens to be big and hairy.

After the disappointing return of **GODZILLA**, who would expect that one of the year's best new actors would be an enormous, 15-foot mountain gorilla? Yes, **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG** is making a big-screen comeback with his beautiful galpal Jill Young, in an unexpectedly moving, exciting new movie from Walt Disney. (The story is so fresh, you can't really call it a "remake").

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG is a touching, action-packed movie, with one of the very best CGI/mechanical creatures since the original **JURASSIC PARK**. What's even better is that the heart of the movie is a strong storyline, and the FX are used to create a very lifelike creature.

Where you never saw **GODZILLA** as more than a special effect, Joe comes across as a living, breathing animal, as important a character as any of the human cast. The new movie is a brilliant re-think of the classic Willis O'Brien/Ray Harryhausen original. Jill is played by real-life African actress Charlize Theron and her relationship to the strong simian is the film's center. The movie makes you care about them by giving them a sibling bond—Jill and Joe were raised like brother and sister by Jill's mother, a Dian Fossey-like environmentalist. When they lose both their mothers in the same night, the two grow up inseparable.

This leads to wonderful moments where, as a baby ape, Joe sits in Jill's lap as she sings him to sleep with African lullabies. Later, when he's huge, Jill sings him to sleep while sitting in *his* lap. The two play and live a happy life in an African mountain range. While it seems odd to call a giant gorilla an underdog, director Ron Underwood makes Joe's size work to the story's advantage. Because he's so big, Underwood makes you constantly worry for him because his huge frame makes him a bigger



Rick Baker's Joe with Charlize Theron (below) as Jill Young. Baker's simian, with the aid of ILM's computer graphics, comes across as real as any living, breathing animal or any character in the human cast.



MIGHTY JOE YOUNG

with a star who happens to be a big hairy ape.

target.

Whether romping around playfully (he likes to play hide-and-seek), eating or sleeping, Joe remains interesting. He moves like a real ape, even running on his knuckles. Scenes of him interacting with humans (such as a jeep hunt in the opening and a chase through a storm drain at the end) are exciting and harrowing. What's even more interesting is, instead of playing Joe as a cute, anthropomorphic creature (as in *HARRY & THE HENDERSONS*), Joe is first and foremost, an animal, and he will behave like an animal in scenes even where it's to his detriment.

When relocated to Southern California, Joe's longing to go back home is achingly conveyed on his face, an amazing creation of the ape-loving Rick Baker. The makeup creator's love for gorillas goes all the way back to his first creature, in John Landis' apeman comedy, *SCHLOCK*. Baker should be dusting off his mantle right about now to make a spot for his latest Oscar for this. Baker's Joe is stunning; he looks and moves like a real ape and yet, you can still see elements of the old Joe. This is a tremendous victory for Baker, who didn't exactly make people forget Willis O'Brien with his work in the remake of *KING KONG*. The new Joe is a terrific creature, seamless and realistic.

Bill Paxton plays Gregg Henry (a combination of the two names of the main male characters from the original), a journeyman adventurer/zoologist who works for a California nature preserve. Paxton has fun with the role, and his reactions to meeting Joe for the first time are quite amusing. It's also nice, that after *TITANIC*, *TWISTER* and mainstream success, Paxton is still game to be in a movie with a "monster." He hasn't been face to face with one since *PREDATOR 2*.

There's a scene where he stumbles into Joe's footprint (a classic giant monster moment, seen recently in the *GODZILLA* remakes) that manages to be both scary and funny.



Ron Underwood directs Bill Paxton as journeyman adventurer/zoologist Gregg Henry in a scene with Baker's ape, a specialist at making movies with heart.

One of the highlights of the movie is a surprise cameo appearance by the original Jill Young, Terry Moore, and *JOE* animator Ray Harryhausen. At a high society function, Jill and Joe are greeted by Moore and Harryhausen as a wealthy couple. "She reminds me of somebody," Moore notes. "You, when we first met," responds Harryhausen, giving her a kiss on the cheek. It's a nifty nod to the original. (They also cleverly use "Beautiful Dreamer" in a way that's too nice to give away.)

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG has impressive action blocks but all in service of a sincere—not syrupy—story. The movie even comes up with a nifty way of explaining giant apes. (It comes out of a recessive gene in normal apes that skips a few generations.)

As a director, Ron Underwood has always had a way of making movies with a heart. A combination of Frank Capra and Steven Spielberg, Underwood has done many fantasy-tinged movies with human stories, like the underrated *HEART & SOULS*. He's always had a talent for directing FX-creatures in a way that make them seem alive, from the giant worms in *TREMORS* to Norman the Calf in *CITY*

SLICKERS, and *JOE* is no exception. His performance is the center of the film and he seems just as alive as Bill Paxton and Charlize Theron. Even though he's a giant ape and a special effect, you spend the film worrying someone will hurt him.

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG doesn't skimp on the set-pieces, as the title creature spends the movie avoiding speeding cars, cops, poachers, and even manages to take on a damaged ferris wheel. The filmmakers also deliver a gleeful slap at *GODZILLA*. (Ironically, because of that movie's anticipated success, *JOE* was moved from a summer release to a Christmas opening.) As fire rages, we see dozens of hanging *Godzilla* dolls catch fire and melt.

What makes *JOE* such a pleasure to watch is that all the characters are fleshed-out and interesting. This is all the more surprising as the screenplay is credited to Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal, whose names have appeared on some of the worst films of the last 12 years. It's much better and has more depth than any past movie they wrote (including such dreadful outings as *SUPERMAN IV: THE QUEST FOR PEACE*, *JEWEL OF THE NILE*, *BEVERLY HILLBILLIES*, *LEGEND OF BILLIE JEAN* and Bruce Willis' *MERCURY RISING*). Most likely, the emotional underpinnings came from some of the uncredited writers who tinkered on the screenplay, including *CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD*'s Mark Medoff and *THELMA & LOUISE*'s Callie Khouri.

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG is a masterpiece, an example of how good a genre film can be when the direction, actors and screenplay are on the same level as the jaw-dropping special FX. It's a triumph for the Disney Studios and a nightmare for Dreamworks, whose animated *PRINCE OF EGYPT* opens against it. Who would have guessed that the strongest part of a giant gorilla would be his heart? □

FROST

Troy Miller on directing Michael Keaton in a Christmas fable with effects charm.

By Douglas Eby

The beginning of *FROST* features Michael Keaton singing blues as leader of his Jack Frost Band, with other musicians including Mark Addy of *THE FULL MONTY*. Director Troy Miller outlined the setup of the story: Jack has agreed to do a show that is going to get him a record deal, "But he's going to miss Christmas with his family, and he decides on the way to the gig he can't do that, and he turns around, slips in the snow, crashes, and dies. A year later, his son Charlie builds a snowman like he did when his father was alive."

In the first act, Jack had given Charlie a harmonica, and now when he's in bed after building the snowman, he plays it, and "we follow the sound outside in this cool Steadicam move," Miller said, "with all this great animation from ILM, and the snowman comes alive. Jack Frost has been reincarnated. But he doesn't really know it, he's bewildered, and goes to Charlie's window, who sees a walking, talking snowman, and freaks out." Miller makes his feature directing debut on *FROST*, which Warner Bros. opens nationwide December 18.

Jack faces problems such as the family dog pulling off one of his stick arms. The snowman is realized with a combination of animatronic heads and suits, and computer-generated figures crafted by ILM. In a few sequences that Miller screened,



Keaton plays Jack, a blues musician who regrets leaving his kid (12 year-old Joseph Cross) on Christmas Eve to play an important gig, only to die in a fatal car crash.

the character is really amazing and believable. With Keaton's voice and the skilled and nuanced facial movement by Jim Henson's Creature Shop puppeteers, the snowman seems very "real" on screen.

Miller noted that Jack "doesn't have any special powers; it's not like *FLUBBER* or anything. He's pretty locked to the physics that three snowballs would have." Miller explained that the face is brought to life so well with "about sixty servos, just state of the art robotics, in the head. When you see it working, the features are so humanistic." For the wider shots with Jack "walking," the character is CGI, which was also used for sequences where he throws snowballs.

The setting for the story is "Medford," a fictional town which they created, Miller not-

ed, using matte paintings added to the real town of Truckee, between Reno and Tahoe on the Nevada border, as well as a backlot in Burbank, dressed with truckloads of manufactured snow. "The town has a lot of similarities to *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* and *Bedford Falls*," he said. "I wasn't trying to be too original in supervising the script through about ten drafts. It's like 'Anywhere, U.S.A.' We're kind of half reality, half fantasy in our town."

The unreality of having an inanimate object come to life isn't explained in any detail in the film. "We never really lay it out, there's no religious intent," said Miller. "It's kind of the magic of snow, and the magic inherent in the quality people find in happiness, and that the son's love is so great for his fa-

ther, he wishes him back so hard. When the father gives the harmonica to his son, he says he got it from a great blues man. He kind of throws it off as a joke, that it would give his son whatever power he wanted. The kid doesn't really pay attention to that, but we find out later that Jack came back because he heard the harmonica. He heard the boy longing for him, and he comes back."

After a number of adventures where he still doesn't accept that he's something other than human, by the end of the movie, Miller said, Jack "becomes acutely aware that he's a snowman, and he goes away. But it's kind of okay, because this time, the son and the wife, played by Kelly Preston, are kind of in closure, and they get to say goodbye to him, and get on with their lives."

Miller praised his young (12-year-old) star Joseph Cross, who plays Charlie: "He's going to be a big star," said Miller. "*WIDE AWAKE* [another film with Cross] is a much smaller movie. He's carrying this; he's the star of this movie. We built this puppet that could walk and talk, and the main puppeteer, Bruce Lanoil, worked the head, but also talked live, so if I wanted to improvise a scene, I could get the puppet talking live, without using the [animatronics], working with Joe. And Joe was great at writing his own scenes, improvising. He's amazing for a kid that young. I'd put him into a scene with Kelly Preston and Keaton, and



Jack finds himself reborn the following year when his son rebuilds their favorite snowman, animatronic effects supplied by the Henson Creature Shop.

he'd hold his own."

JACK FROST is Miller's first feature film, but he's directed a number of television projects, including the current MR. SHOW, a sketch comedy show on HBO, and he's done the opening of the Oscar shows with Billy Crystal, through Miller's company Dakota Films. He noted that with his extensive TV experience, using Flame and other digital production software, moving into features was mainly going for a different resolution, and having the opportunity to shoot in anamorphic at 2.35:1. His DP for this film is the acclaimed László Kovács (GHOSTBUSTERS; CLOSE ENCOUNTERS; and, not to be overlooked, THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES WHO STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME MIXED-UP

ZOMBIES of 1963).

Miller was attracted to the quality of the story for his choice of feature debut: "It's a great, old-fashioned Christmas story, kind of Capra-esque, without being just a remake of anything," he said. "It's about a family who loses somebody too early, and realizes there are things they never got to say. I was first intrigued with it because Sam Raimi did a draft of it, and was on as director years ago. For a bunch of reasons, he moved on to something else, so it became an open assignment. I don't think they wanted it to go as dark as it once was. But I figured if they were open-minded enough to have a guy like Sam Raimi, that meant they weren't looking for just the standard holiday fare."

The Raimi screenplay had been further developed by Mark

"It's an updated version of a holiday classic," said director Troy Miller. "If any of the masters were to make a movie now, it's a good fun way to do it."

Steven Johnson, who wrote and directed SIMON BIRCH, and Miller brought in Jeff Cesario for additional writing.

For his first feature, Miller wanted to do something unique: "I wasn't looking to do one of those cookie-cutter movies" he said. "And it worked beautifully. The studio was so supportive, they let me use tons of cool camera equipment, and special mounts. It's not nearly as stylistic as a Raimi film, or a Coen brothers, but it does have an unusual camera style about it."

Producer credits include Irving Azoff (FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH); Matthew Baer (THE REPLACEMENT KILLERS); Michael Tadross (THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE), and Mark Canton, doing his first film since leaving Sony. Miller noted, "That says something, that he would agree to do this movie." And Miller points out there are so many directors "who have bad things to say about the studio, and I don't. They've been great, and given me everything I've wanted, they've been really responsible."

Referring more to the tone of his film, Miller noted it's an "updated version of a holiday classic, but there's no precedent for that classic. I feel if Sturges

or any of the masters were to make a movie now, to compete with ARMAGEDDON and big action-adventure movies, it's a good, fun way to do it this way, to take advantage of what you can do with a digital box. And the pace of it, as well. It's really hard to do a family film that's intended for a wide demo that is just relationship; we have a couple of huge chase scenes. And the majority of it is in-camera. That's the fun of it. We had a full crew up in the snow shooting stuff, but aided with digital rig-removal that you couldn't do years ago. But it's still almost the classic 'Cowboys and Indians' with the good guys and bad guys in a chase. We're just doing it in a more contemporary world."

Another element is the "irreverent attitude" of Michael Keaton, Miller said with pleasure. "He was my first choice. But he's not the Keaton from DESPERATE MEASURES. He's one of my favorite actors, especially now that I've worked with him for so long. He's so versatile. You look at what he did in BATMAN, and for this movie, he's the guy you want to hang out with, the guy next door, plus he's a great musician, and plays and sings on all the tracks, and wrote a song for the

Miller directs the Creature Shop puppeteers to give the snowman a life-like performance. Warner Bros opens the film nationwide December 18.





Setting up a shot with Cross as Jack's son and Henson arm puppeteer Allan Trautman (r). The film was first developed by Sam Raimi, who dropped out.

FROST

EFFECTS

Creating the Creature Shop's Snowman star.

By Douglas Eby

movie. He became a blues musician for this movie. And he's got the likability that you know from NIGHT SHIFT or MR. MOM, and the camera loves him. He's able to bring what we called his 'Keatonisms' to a scene, and make it his own, as opposed to just trying to do a line of jokes. This isn't that kind of broad comedy. It's more about relationship."

Another lead in the film, as Jack Frost's wife, then widow, is Kelly Preston (HOLY MAN; JERRY MAGUIRE; AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON). Miller explained his thinking in choosing her for the role: "She's funny, she's bright, she's got great timing, and she has a great resume of playing very disparate characters. It's like it's a byproduct that she's kind of the beautiful, blond 'American Dream.' In this movie, you buy that she would be married to Jack and have this twelve-year-old son. The backstory is that she would probably manage the band; they're probably from the city and moved to this small town because she's from there. She has that real contemporary look that you'd have in a Midwestern town, or in Colorado. And she totally got the idea that we were going for, kind of a magical film that's half in reality, and that has a comic point of view. But it's comedy like a family can be sarcastic with one another, as opposed to just broad, standup comedy."

Miller noted that he chose his crew as carefully as he cast

his actors. "Mayne Berke, my production designer, is a creative genius at building this world. László Kovács, in my mind, is the foremost lighting cameraman in the world, and I got him because he loved this story, and he's got an 11- or 12-year-old daughter. And my editor is Larry Jordan, who just did FALLEN and he's done comedy, worked with Jim Brooks and all the greats. So it's building a group of people who are still inspired by historic filmmaking. It was an all-star team."

Miller emphasized that he "did not want to play it safe" in making the film. "We built a bunch of custom rigs for the hockey rink scenes. We have snow scenes with moving camera, but the way they did in James Bond with a Steadicam. We're doing a fresher point of view that doesn't breed great suspense, or kind of dark pain."

Returning to what drew his interest for making this particular film, Miller said he was looking for "a nice, smaller little independent film, character based. And I liked this story so much, but I wondered about getting a snowman to do all this. One of the producers, Matt Baer, sent me over to the Henson Creature Shop, and all they had was a head mounted on a pole. They just did this quick little demo, moving the eyes and mouth, and they had me. The snowman can raise emotions from the audience with no dialogue, which is pretty amazing." □

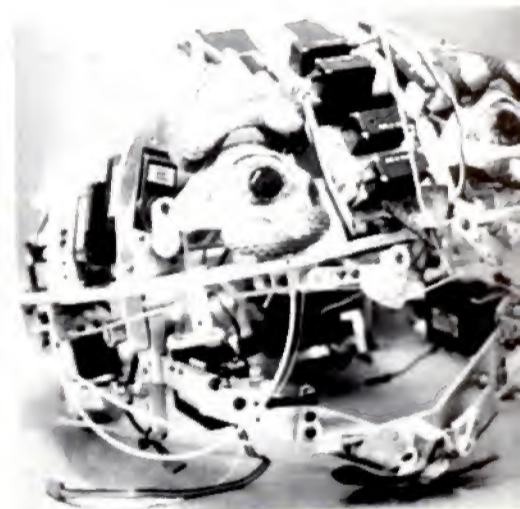
Jim Henson's Creature Shop, where Matt Britton is general manager, built the animatronic snowman for FROST, a creature that was also rendered in CGI by digital effects company ILM. Actually, Britton noted, they built a number of different costumes for different needs: "Altogether we did 39 different costume parts, radio-controlled animatronic heads, mechanical arms and other things."

The snowman character is a reincarnation of a musician named Jack Frost, played by Michael Keaton. Britton described him as "not a bad guy, but he's kind of an absentee dad, and always kind of not coming through on his promises. Like he says he'll be at his son's hockey game, and he doesn't show up. He comes back as the snowman, trying to right the things in his life that were wrong when he was alive. His kid builds a snowman in the backyard, and puts his dad's hat and scarf and mittens on it, and it comes to life."

For the scenes where the snowman has his voice, Keaton went to a studio and recorded all his lines on DAT tapes. Then, Britton said, "we take those tapes and use our performance hardware to record, edit and playback a performance of the animatronic snowman head that's synced up to Keaton's dialogue. When you're on set, whenever we fire off a line on the head, you also hear Keaton's voice out of the speakers."

In the earlier days of electro-mechanical animatronics, many

operators might be required for a single creature. But there have been many advances in motor miniaturization and control systems, as Britton pointed out: "The head has 27 servo motors, and those are all under the control of one puppeteer, in this case Bruce Lanoil. We have a piece of equipment we call the Henson Performance Control System, and that allows us to put all 27 of those servos under the control of one person, where most shops will have four or



The internal mechanics of the snowman for the film created by the Henson Creature Shop in L.A.

five, with radio-control airplane transmitters, and one guy controls the blinks, and one guy controls the brows. This puts it all in the control of one person, who's an actor, who can bring a much more intriguing performance than technicians."

When the scene required it, the animatronic head was part of a costume worn by actors Denise Cheshire or Bobby Porter. This is, Britton noted, a traditional looking snowman, with stick arms and "little coal eyes" with the head and arms



Mark Wahlberg applies a last-minute touch-up on set. Henson supplied 39 different effects props, including mechanical arms and radio controlled heads.

radio-controlled, and the movement of the body controlled by the performer. "Frosty" as Britton refers to the costume, had to have sophisticated mouth movements in order to appear to be speaking, and is "probably the most articulate character that we've done to date," he says. "A lot of it has to do with the fact he was pretty big, so there was room to get a lot of stuff in there. All the servos have to fit in around a human head, but it's a lot bigger than what we did for the GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE apes, which was a lot closer to the face, and stuff like dogs and pigeons for DR. DOLITTLE, which are so small, you can only fit so much stuff in there."

One of the ways this project has expanded the technical expertise of the Creature Shop, Britton noted, is in "duplicating the look of snow. That was a big

deal, because if you make a snowball, it's not flexible, it's completely rigid, but if you build a snowman costume that's completely rigid, it doesn't really do anything. So we had to find the right blend of giving flexibility to the suit, but still making it look like snow, so that was a big challenge. When the project came to us, the studio had already done some research and had decided they really liked the look of a translucent white silicone for the skin. Which was a nice choice, because it's a good material for duplicating the look of snow. The downside of it is that silicone is really heavy and on something as big as a snowman, a solid silicone skin is just too much weight, so what we ended up doing is using a white tinted foam latex skin, which is nice and light. That gave us most of the structure of the skin, but

Miller rehearses Cross with Henson puppeteer Bruce Lanoll and suit performer Denise Cheshire. ILM created additional snowman action shots as CGI effects.



"You work on goofy monster movies and things to pay the bills," said the Creature Shop's Matt Britton. "You don't feel you've contributed to cinema, but this is good."

then we painted it with a layer of the translucent white silicone, and then before it hardened, we pressed artificial plastic snow into the silicone."

Their approach paid off, Britton exclaimed: "It looks terrific. He really looks like a snowman come to life." When they shot on location in Truckee, California, in a real snow landscape, the costume, Britton said, "really looked like he belonged in the snow. Everybody was very complimentary, but I would say the actors who were the most so were Mark Addy (THE FULL MONTY) and Henry Rollins."

This project has been a boost for the Creature Shop "across the board" said Britton. "Not just the technology. One, it's a really good picture, and script. The director Troy Miller [TV projects BEVERLY HILLS FAMILY ROBINSON, MR. SHOW, WEIRD SCIENCE] was really impressive. For a first-timer, he did great. And I remember reading the script the first time vividly. When I got to the end, I was just in tears. I had tears rolling down my face, it's so sweet and poignant and heartfelt. So just being associated with something like that is really cool. So often in the business we're in, you work on goofy monster movies and things that pay the bills, but you don't feel like you've contributed that much to the history of cinema. But this is a really good piece of work, and I'd love it if this came to be like the RUDOLPH THE RED NOSED REINDEER special you watch every year, or like CHRISTMAS STORY, and I think it has the potential to do that."

In terms of technical advances, the film has provided an opportunity to develop new ways to craft skin, Britton noted, "because we were combining silicone and foam latex. And the head wasn't successful

just because it was big and you could fit a lot of servos, but the way our mechanical designer, named Tristan Maduro, designed it. He milked the most performance you could get out of the thing. And also, the radio-controlled arms we did were a neat thing. Frosty has these little stick arms that you can't fit any servos into, so we had to mount the servos on a backpack the performer would wear, with cables running down into the stick arms. And that performed beautifully."

Britton emphasized again his appreciation for the class of the film: "This was an exciting project, and a long one. We were on it for thirteen months, starting with the design. That's a long chunk of your life. A lot of times, you work on something for a year, and it comes out in theatres and it sucks, it's a bomb, and you go, okay, there's a year of my life. But this one, we have really high hopes for. It seems like a quality piece of work." □

Robin McCarthy readies the snowman for his take, lip-synced to Keaton's voice track by Henson.



DEVIL FOLLOW

Screenwriter Joseph Stefano on the controversial remake.

By Frank Garcia

Although director Gus Van Sant had a 38-year old script in his hands to produce a modern-day xerox of Alfred Hitchcock's classic film *PSYCHO*, he still needed a screenwriter. In order to bring the 1960 black and white chiller into the 1990s, some minor changes were necessary. To do this, Van Sant turned to the script's author, Joseph Stefano, for help.

"I was very surprised when I heard Gus Van Sant was going to do it," said veteran producer and screenwriter Joseph Stefano. "I thought that was interesting. Then, I heard from Gus. We met and had lunch and had a very nice conversation. He's a very creative, interesting man! He told me he wanted to do this the way Broadway plays are revived rather than a remake where so many changes are made. He wanted to do it almost word-for-word and shot-for-shot. I thought that was an interesting way to do it, to bring it into the 1990s. So I was very happy about that.

"It's a very rare occasion. I don't know how any other screenwriter would deal with that. For me, it was remarkable."

To show just how well the script has weathered the test of time, Stefano described the elements requiring a "polish." "My feeling is that the audience would not be able to identify with the young woman, very attractive with a good job and a man she wants, and risk all that for \$40,000. It's just not enough



Vince Vaughn as Norman Bates. Stefano wants to give the remake the benefit of the doubt and see what new talent brings to it.

money for the '90s!" laughed Stefano. "I think the movie is meant to appeal to young people who don't know *PSYCHO* very much and therefore they would have a hard time believing that anyone would do this for \$40,000. How much is \$40,000 now? It wouldn't last a year now. So, make it \$400,000. So we're now talking about something close to half a million dollars.

"There's some other minor changes like the price of a motel room, things like that."

Remakes are common enough in Hollywood, but Van Sant's creative decision to recreate the story as closely as possible has been very controversial. Film critics and fans at large all seem to be asking the same question—Why?

"That's on the minds of

everybody, I think," acknowledged Stefano. "The question—why do it?—is about the only question I get from most people I've spoken to. I hear from journalists, critics, friends and family, movie-goers, neighbors. I didn't get any positive feedback from any of them. You really have to ask Gus what he hopes to achieve with it. I didn't ask that particular question. What I think the studio hopes to achieve is a blockbuster."

Fully cognizant that Van Sant's effort will undoubtedly force comparisons against the original film, Stefano remarked, "The spark that I'm getting from people is 'Why were you even involved in such a thing?' I just say, 'Be fair. Wait until it's out to see it.' I'm trying to stop what I feel is the kind of criticism that can hurt the opening of the movie. Anyone who knows film knows *PSYCHO*. People love being scared by it. People feel like it's theirs."

Stefano's feelings about the whole affair are very simple—he remains open minded to the potential results. "I have to be that way because I am just about [open minded with] everything I do, so why would I not be that way about this," he said. "It's like a Broadway play revival and you love to see other actors play your characters. I would be very fascinated by a new Norman Bates. Who ever imagined that? I certainly never dreamed of seeing a new Norman Bates or Marion Crane. I think Janet Leigh and Tony Perkins are just indelible in the

Anne Heche stands-in for Janet Leigh.

minds of moviegoers. That's going to be a tough one."

At the time of this interview, Stefano had only a brief glimpse of the proceedings and so it was difficult for him to accurately evaluate how the film experiment was shaping up.

"I've seen a few sequences cut together," said Stefano. "I don't know what this movie will be like finished. I don't want to second guess it. I think it will be very interesting to watch it and see what exactly happens and do we have a different version? I have no idea. All I know is that we have a different director, different actors, different sets, and the only thing that's the same is the script and the music. How all this will work will be very interesting to see. I wouldn't judge an actor's performance based on just a couple of scenes of a movie. I really judge it by the finished product. There's no other way to judge what's going on in a movie until I see it all put together. And that's including if I were producing this. I would still not be able to really know."

The recreated sequence that Stefano viewed was the moment where Norman Bates, owner of the Bates Motel invited his rare guest Marion Crane



Why re-do it: Stefano is as puzzled by Gus Van Sant's remake as the rest of us.

into his back parlor for a bite to eat. "It was my dialogue being spoken again after 38 years! To hear it again!" laughed Stefano. "They were saying exactly the same words but I didn't feel like it was the same movie. There was a difference and I don't know how to describe that to you.

"It's exciting to me to see different interpretations. I never liked Tony's subsequent versions of Norman Bates. I never thought he captured it again," in the three sequels; *PSYCHO II* (1983), *PSYCHO III* (1986) and *PSYCHO IV: THE BEGINNING* (1990), scripted by Stefano.

"I thought it must be like what playwrights must enjoy all the time because plays are always being revived," continued Stefano. "I would imagine Arthur Miller must have seen 100 and some productions of 'Death of a Salesman.' I think Tennessee Williams saw a tremendous number of versions of his plays. It's true of all playwrights that they get to see and hear their characters interpreted by various actors. Screenwriters don't have that. Generally, often as a rule when you write a screenplay and the movie is made—that's it! If they remake it, they usually change it so the screenplay is

no longer recognizable. Would you recognize the recent movie, *A PERFECT MURDER*, [as being from] *DIAL M FOR MURDER*?"

However, Stefano admits that he likes the new cast as played by Vince Vaughn and Anne Heche in the major roles of Norman Bates and Marion Crane.

What fascinates Stefano about this project is that if Van Sant is using the original film as a blueprint, what is there about Van Sant himself to contribute to the film? At best, he is merely a directorial stand-in for Hitchcock's masterful handiwork.

"I don't know if it's possible for a director to direct a movie exactly as it was directed be-

Stefano with David McCallum, filming a rewrite of his script of "A Feasibility Study" for *THE OUTER LIMITS*. He feels that remakes are getting out of hand.



SCREENWRITER JOSEPH STEFANO

"My instincts say that things that are Gus Van Sant will drift into the movie. There will be no way to stop them. Your very soul comes out when you're making a movie."

fore," mused Stefano. "My instincts say that things that are Gus Van Sant will drift into the movie. There will be no way to stop them. Your very soul comes out when you're making a movie. I think there will be shades that will be different. I think attitudes. And actors. I don't think any actor wants to get up there on the screen and imitate Tony Perkins or Janet Leigh.

"It's impossible for any actor, worth his or her soul to just go in and imitate...therefore it's a different interpretation, saying the same words."

In the grand scheme of contemporary filmmaking, however, this project may well be a symptom of a greater condition. Remakes and television property revivals are increasingly dominating today's production agendas.

When it is suggested that Hollywood is creatively bankrupt and is reaching back to classics for material, Stefano heartily agrees. "When you say Hollywood is bankrupt, it's not that there are no writers who are offering them something else. I find it has nothing to do with the creative aspect of movies. It has to do with whether these executives are going to save their asses. They don't want to 'okay' a project that's different

or new. When they do, they often have a great deal of success.

"It might be something the public might want to see. It may not gross \$15 million in the opening weekend, but we sure would love to see it in the sense that it should not be made just for the bank account but made for entertainment."

If remakes persist in Hollywood, Stefano has this to say: "I'll tell you what my personal feelings are now, not as a filmmaker, but as a filmgoer. You can make all the duplicates of *CITIZEN KANE* that you want. I will go and see the original movie.

"I can't stop these people [from doing remakes], we don't own them. The studios own them. There's no way anybody could stop the owners of *CITIZEN KANE* from making another one. All we can do is not go see it."

And Stefano is all too aware of the potential consequences of remakes being successful. "If *PSYCHO* is successful, if it makes a lot of money, you're going to be inundated with word-for-word, shot-for-shot remakes of movies made before," he warned. "I'm not just talking about *CITIZEN KANE*, I'm talking about *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE*. The movies that people have loved and are kind of our signposts through the years. Why not remake *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* shot-for-shot? And get someone else to play the Henry Fonda role? That will happen if *PSYCHO* is successful.

"If the new *PSYCHO* bombs, then they'll say, 'Let's go back to the old way where we changed all the characters...' What's different about this is Gus Van Sant didn't say to me, 'Please rewrite Marion Crane as the editor of a New York magazine,' or 'Let's set it in the south of France...' He said, 'Let's do the same thing!'" □



Disney  PIXAR

a bugs life

By Lawrence French

With the release of TOY STORY in 1995, Pixar animation studios became the undisputed leader in the field of computer animation. Like Disney's best animated films, TOY STORY merged a creative vision with groundbreaking technical achievement. But even before Pixar's first feature was released, a team of story men and computer scientists were hard at work developing techniques and ideas for the giant strides they hoped to make with their second film. John Lasseter, the director of TOY STORY, as well as Vice-President of creative development at Pixar, began by reviewing subject matter that would be appropriate for CGI.

"We were toying with numerous different concepts for our next movie," said Lasseter, "and up came the idea of doing insects in our medium, which really lend themselves to computer graphics. In the very beginning, when we just have a one sentence concept, it's really based on our knowledge and love of the medium. When we start a project, we don't even think of the technology needed to make it. It's always about the story and the characters. Initially, we were talking about Aesop's fables, and the idea of "The Ant and The Grasshopper" came up. We kind of took the fable and turned it on its ear, so now the grasshopper

An ant named Flik assembles an unlikely group of insect saviors, refugees from a broken-down flea circus, to defend his colony from the depredations of marauding grasshoppers in *A BUG'S LIFE*, which Disney opened November 27.

The creators of TOY STORY debut their second CGI feature.



Co-director Andrew Stanton and director John Lasseter (r) pose with the models of the film's CGI leads, spearheading the creative team at Pixar.

takes revenge on the ants. That's where the idea of *A BUG'S LIFE* evolved from. Then, the more we talked about it, and the more we looked at different kinds of bugs, the more excited we got, due to all of the various possibilities."

As the story was developing, a braintrust of computer graphics scientists, under the direction of Dr. Ed Catmull and Dr. Bill Reeves, were busy implementing advances to Pixar's

proprietary animation system, so their follow-up film would be able to make the leap to the next plateau of computer technology. "Pretty early on in the story process, John came down with the mandate that he wanted to put a lot of crowd scenes in *A BUG'S LIFE*," said Reeves. "So we had to step back and look at what we needed in order to accomplish that. In the end we built a system that sits on top of what we al-

ready have, and it integrates fairly well. It allowed us to do over 400 crowd shots, each of which has between 30 to 750 ants, depending on how wide the shot was."

During the early stages of story development for *A BUG'S LIFE*, Lasseter was still busy putting the finishing touches on *TOY STORY*, so it fell on the shoulders of Andrew Stanton, his second in command, to get the story ball rolling. Stanton, an Academy Award nominee (for the screenplay of *TOY STORY*), would be elevated to co-director on *A BUG'S LIFE*, a job he said he actually performed on *TOY STORY*.

"John and I had always worked side by side prior to *TOY STORY*," said Stanton, "and I fell into writing on *TOY STORY* about a third of the way through. We're actually in on all the meetings together, and we rarely split stuff up, because it's actually a collaborative teaming between John and I. That's how we work best. It's not out of necessity of needing two people in two different places at the same time. It was created because that's how we work anyway."

As Stanton began a series of brainstorming sessions with about six other story men, the narrative for *A BUG'S LIFE* began to emerge: a pacifist ant colony, living on a island isolated from the rest of the world, each year gives up part of their harvest to a band of hungry grasshoppers. Seeking help, the colony hires warrior bugs to fend off the bandits. Like *THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN*, the storyline somewhat parallels an idea first used



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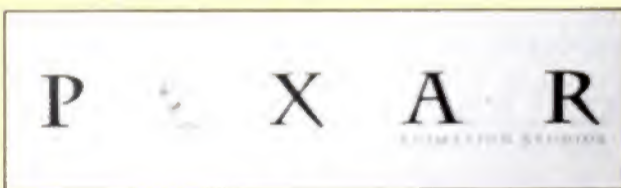
Studio chiefs Ed Catmull and Steve Jobs on fashioning an animation name to be reckoned with.

By Lawrence French

In 1995 Pixar's executive Vice-President, Ed Catmull realized his long standing dream of producing the world's first computer animated film. Three years later, Catmull has a lofty new goal: to produce a CGI feature every year. Steve Jobs, Pixar's chairman and CEO, outlined this new objective in his annual report to stockholders last June: "Our mission is to build Pixar into a great feature animation studio," wrote Jobs. "No one other than Disney has been able to do this in over 60 years (although many have



Catmull (l), Pixar's executive vice president, and Jobs, the company's chairman and CEO, making the Pixar logo (below) a visible marketing tool.



tried), because it is really, really hard. And Pixar is making it even harder by trying to do it in the new medium of computer animation. Pixar is poised to take its next major leap forward by cranking up our output in an effort to release one animated feature a year. If we can turn out three great pictures in the next three years (which will not be easy), we will achieve our goal of becoming the second great feature animation studio."

This grandiose objective appears to be within reach, as *A BUG'S LIFE* will be followed a year later by *TOY STORY II*, with a still-in-development movie, *HIDDEN CITY*, slated to come out in the year 2000. This rapid acceleration of Pixar's production pace has allowed quick

promotion from within the ranks—particularly among the staff of animators. Ash Brannon and Colin Brady, both animators on the original *TOY STORY* are now co-directing the sequel. Pete Docter, the supervising animator on *TOY STORY*, is preparing to direct Pixar's fourth feature, *HIDDEN CITY*. And John Lasseter, as Vice-President of creative development, is overseeing all of these ongoing film projects.

"I'll continue making features," said Lasseter, "but at the same time there's a number of people here I'm helping with their directing skills. We're really starting to develop these guys, because it's important to show that Pixar has a lot of talented visionaries. Our goal is to hire the best people and enough of them, so we can have overlapping productions. So when people come off of one picture, they can go on to another. It's not about turning

them out any faster. Each film will still take four years to make."

Interestingly enough, *TOY STORY II* was originally slated to be a direct-to-home-video sequel, but that plan was scrapped when Disney and Pixar realized the quality of the project was far exceeding all expectations. "Originally we decided to make a sequel that would be measured by a gentler yardstick," explained Jobs. "We thought it would be almost impossible to recruit a second crew as talented and experienced as the one [that worked on the] original *TOY STORY* [since most of them were already working on *A BUG'S LIFE*]. But we were wrong. We underestimated Pixar's gravitational pull—it has become one of the hottest places to work in our industry—and we pulled together an incredible team to make *TOY STORY 2*."

"We found that everyone working on the sequel wanted

to make it even better than *TOY STORY*," added Catmull. "We had a great story and it looks great, so we said, 'wait a minute, why are we kidding ourselves. We're really making a theatrical film.' As a result, we switched over."

The original idea behind making the *TOY STORY* sequel a direct-to-video project, was to do it quickly and simply, with a substantial savings to be realized, since all the characters had been previously created. "We actually saved in several areas" notes Catmull. "Firstly, in the modeling. All the computer models of the characters had already been built. Secondly, in character definition. It usually takes some time to develop the personality of the characters. In the case of *TOY STORY II*, that's already been worked out. We still have to focus on the story, so there's no savings on the story, but a lot of things don't change, in terms of characters. Another benefit is that our tools have developed. Our whole animation modeling system has taken a big step forward since the first film."

On all its future movies, Pixar will also be getting a bigger slice of the profits. After *TOY STORY* grossed over \$350 million worldwide, they were in a strong position to re-negotiate their original contract with Disney—which in the case of *TOY STORY* netted Pixar only \$26 million, (from theatrical revenue)—since Disney had fully financed the film. But Catmull says there was never a thought of going anywhere else but Disney.

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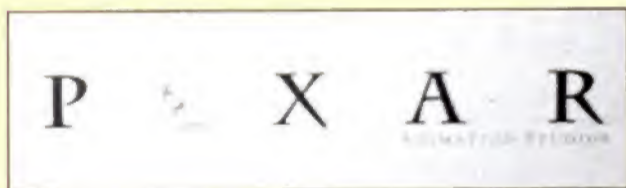
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Next up for Pixar, Woody and Buzz Lightyear return in TOY STORY 2 (above) for year-end 1999, with HIDDEN CITY in 2000, fulfilling a company ambition to match Disney's output in CGI and release an animated feature each year.

relationship with Disney," observed Catmull, "there was no point in playing games and trying to negotiate with another studio. We both knew we wanted to work together. So fairly early on they agreed to a 50/50 deal, where now we split the costs and the profits of each movie equally. It's what made the most sense for both companies."

Another concern for Pixar was getting their name before the public. When TOY STORY was released, most audiences assumed it was a Disney film, without realizing it was actually made by an independent studio—meaning it could have just as easily been released through another distributor.

"Branding was one of our top concerns in negotiating our new Disney Partnership," reported Jobs. "When A BUG'S LIFE premieres in November, audiences will know that Pixar created the film."

"Disney was actually pretty good about co-branding," added Catmull. "Both of our names are now in equal size before the title of the film. And all the merchandising will go out with tags that say both 'Disney' and 'Pixar.'"

"With its new goal of making a picture a year, Pixar will obviously be more actively looking for suitable story material. "We're open to everything," noted Catmull, "but what we're very clear about is everything we do here is story-driven. It's what drives us in terms of our animation and our technology. So although all the projects in our pipeline are original ideas,

we may eventually do something based on a book, or something aimed at an older audience. In fact we've looked at children's books a couple of times, and for various reasons they didn't quite come together. In terms of doing something for an older audience, that's also possible. We wouldn't do something like Ralph Bashki did—I wouldn't want to, but if we had a great story, that was something that maybe children couldn't understand, fine, but we're not out there searching for that. But just because of the nature of the people here, there are certain kinds of stories that we're not inclined to do. We wouldn't do a special effects driven piece like TWISTER, for example. All the kinds of things we're likely to do are going to be very strongly story-driven."

One intriguing possibility would be combining 3-D computer animation, with traditional 2-D cel animation. "That definitely could be interesting," said Catmull. "I think artistically it's interesting, but economically it's more expensive doing 2-D animation—although we could do it, if it were important. However, we want to be able to take more risks with our films and do things that are artistically different. The best way to take risks is if you can do it at a lower cost. If you've got a real expensive film, all of a sudden everybody's looking over your shoulder trying to second-guess you, and that's not conducive to good artistic development."

From an artistic standpoint,

one reason Pixar has become such an exciting place to work is that John Lasseter is not only directing movies, he is also part of the top management team that is approving them. "All the executives here have clearly defined roles," stated Catmull. "John is the creative Vice-President, so he's the one who takes the lead on new ideas. And he is the person who has the final say-so on creative decisions. We don't have Steve Jobs or myself trying to dictate to story teams what they're supposed to be doing. Conversely, John doesn't negotiate. Steve Jobs does that, and there are certain things that nobody else but Steve Jobs can do. And our technical group reports to me, so it all works out perfectly fine."

Indeed, Pixar's future seems to be unusually bright. And like Walt Disney before him, Steve Jobs seems to have a strong desire to continue the Pixar tradition of visionary filmmaking. "We are committed to making Pixar the second great animation studio," said Jobs. "This means protecting Pixar's unique collaborative environment and ensuring that when one of our creative or technical geniuses has a brilliant spark, it will ignite into a flame. Stepping up to a picture a year, while difficult, is helping us provide the variety and opportunity that Pixar needs to offer its talent as we become a world-class studio. Judging by the innovation and artistry happening at Pixar these days, we're going in the right direction." □



"When we start a project we don't even think of the technology needed to make it," said Lasseter. "It's always about the story and the characters."

by Akira Kurosawa in THE SEVEN SAUMAURI.

"Actually, it really doesn't follow THE SEVEN SAUMAURI too much," said Stanton. "That aspect was somewhat coincidental. It's actually more like SPARTACUS or THE MUSIC MAN. In the early stages of story development, it was pretty much me running the show, and then when TOY STORY wrapped, John became more available and took what we had and started to make it more into the film he wanted to make. It was still malleable enough at that point. In fact, we were initially playing with the idea of using a red ant as the hero, who was an outsider to the ant

Dave Foley, recording Flik, an actor who gave heart to what Lasseter called the story's "unlikely" hero.





“I don’t like this idea that you just take out a golden rolodex and get all these big names,” said Stanton. “It’s not the thing that makes or breaks the character.”

colony. We were fascinated with the prejudices that would happen with that, and thought it would be quite interesting.”

but, a problem with that concept soon surfaced. By making the hero a red ant that was part of a circus troupe, (who are subsequently hired to fight the grasshoppers), there was no compelling motive as to why they’d stay and risk their lives. “We realized that the protagonist needed to be part of the ant colony. He’s got to have a family there, so there’s a handcuff, and he can’t just leave. Once he had that kind of bond to the colony, it made the consequences understandable and empathetical to the audience. It seems obvious now, but at the time we didn’t see it.”

So instead of a red ant, the hero of the story, became a well-meaning and inventive blue ant named *Flik*. Unfortunately, *Flik*’s over-eagerness to do good, tends to turn situations towards bad. He accidentally destroys the food supply that is supposed to go to the grasshoppers, and in an attempt to redeem himself, goes off and hires some second-rate circus performers, whom he believes are soldier bugs. This misunderstanding, provides the film with a classic screwball comedy type situation, that also satisfied two key story functions: “Firstly,” said Stanton, “we could pick bugs from any part of the world and have it make perfect sense. It allowed us to use some of the



Art director Tia Kratter, devising the film’s color schemes. After flirting with red for the ants, Lasseter chose purple for the royals and blue to beige for others.

most identifiable insects we remembered—especially from when we were kids.”

“Secondly,” added Lasseter, “it was important that the ants could look at this collection of circus bugs, and believe, for some reason or another, that they’re tough warrior bugs. Many of our choices were pretty obvious, like having a praying mantis, or a rhino beetle, but for a couple, like the gypsy moth, we had to do some research, to figure out how they might be perceived as warrior bugs. The problem we had with *Gypsy*, was, how would she come off as a warrior? She was like a *Vanna White* type of character, so we kept saying, ‘How could *Vanna White* show up in small town in the midwest and people buy her as a warrior?’ Well, in doing our research, we found there’s a certain kind of moth, that when it opens its wings from the back, it has these owl-like eyes. It’s a defense mechanism, to ward off predators, so we used that and it really made her into a much more ferocious creature.”

“We also purposely made the ants a very sheltered community,” observed Stanton. “They’re on an island, and we get it across that they never leave their little world. They’re ignorant to all the other types of bugs that can exist out in the world. So when they see the circus bugs, although the audience knows they’re this rundown bunch of losers, the ants are impressed by the shape, size and uniqueness of this band of insects, just out of sheer naiveté.

That allowed us to make the circus troupe into a bunch of losers, but still look impressive to this passive ant community.”

Choosing the nine different bugs to be used in the circus was based on what Lasseter likes to call the integrity of the insects. “We studied them to figure out what they might do as circus performers,” stated Lasseter. “We were constantly thinking of the integrity of the bug. We also wanted to have a wide variety of insects. It was a dual thing, where they had to be part of the circus, as well as be believable, from the ants point of view, as tough warrior bugs. As a kid, my favorites were pill bugs—or roly polly’s. They would roll up in a ball and you’d wait for them to open back up. So we have two pill bugs, *Tuck* and *Roll*, who roll around and pop up and climb over each other. The fact that they’d roll up in a ball, lent itself to making them acrobats. Technically, pill bugs aren’t insects at all, but crustaceans. If you look at them closely, they’re more similar to a crab.

“I also loved ladybugs as a kid, and they were one of the first bugs we thought of. We thought, ‘It could be like a guy that carries a big chip on his shoulder, because everyone assumes he’s a lady.’ So we named him *Francis*, and then when we started researching voices, *Denis Leary* seemed like a real natural for the ladybug.

“For *Rosie*, the black widow spider, being able to string up a web, led us to think of her as a

tightrope walking high wire act. Then, the rhino beetle, *Dim* is very strong. He can carry 80 times his body weight, so he’s like the elephant of the circus. For the praying mantis, the more we studied it, the more it seemed like he was dressed up, with big French cuffs, and that headed us to the notion of a magician. The way his wings are, it looks like he’s wearing a tuxedo dinner jacket, and his body has a kind of built-in ascot. He’s known as *Manny*, formerly ‘*Manto the magnificent*.’

“*Gypsy*, his lovely wife and assistant, has these beautiful wings, which are almost like a cape. We studied a lot of magicians, and were inspired by classic vaudevillian magic acts. But we found that often the assistants are as interesting as the magicians, because they’re dressed so beautifully. That’s because, at certain times they draw your eye away from what the magician is doing.

“Then, the littlest one of them all is the owner, *P.T. Flea*, who is a real money-grubbing parasite. It’s a real run-down circus, and as we say they can’t even draw flies. The audience they have left is just a few flies, and that’s about it.” Rounding out the company of circus bugs are *Slim*, a cerebral walking stick and *Heimlich*, a caterpillar with a voracious appetite. Art director *Bob Pauley* designed most of the creatures after a careful study of their real life counterparts. “Of course, we had to make a lot of concessions,” admitted Pauley, “because we wanted them to be accessible. We left off the mandibles and the hair to make them more appealing. So although they’re all stylized, we still pretty much based them on the actual insect. Any time there were questions on how to construct them, we’d look to the real bug, and study that—their limbs, joints, exoskeleton, and so on.

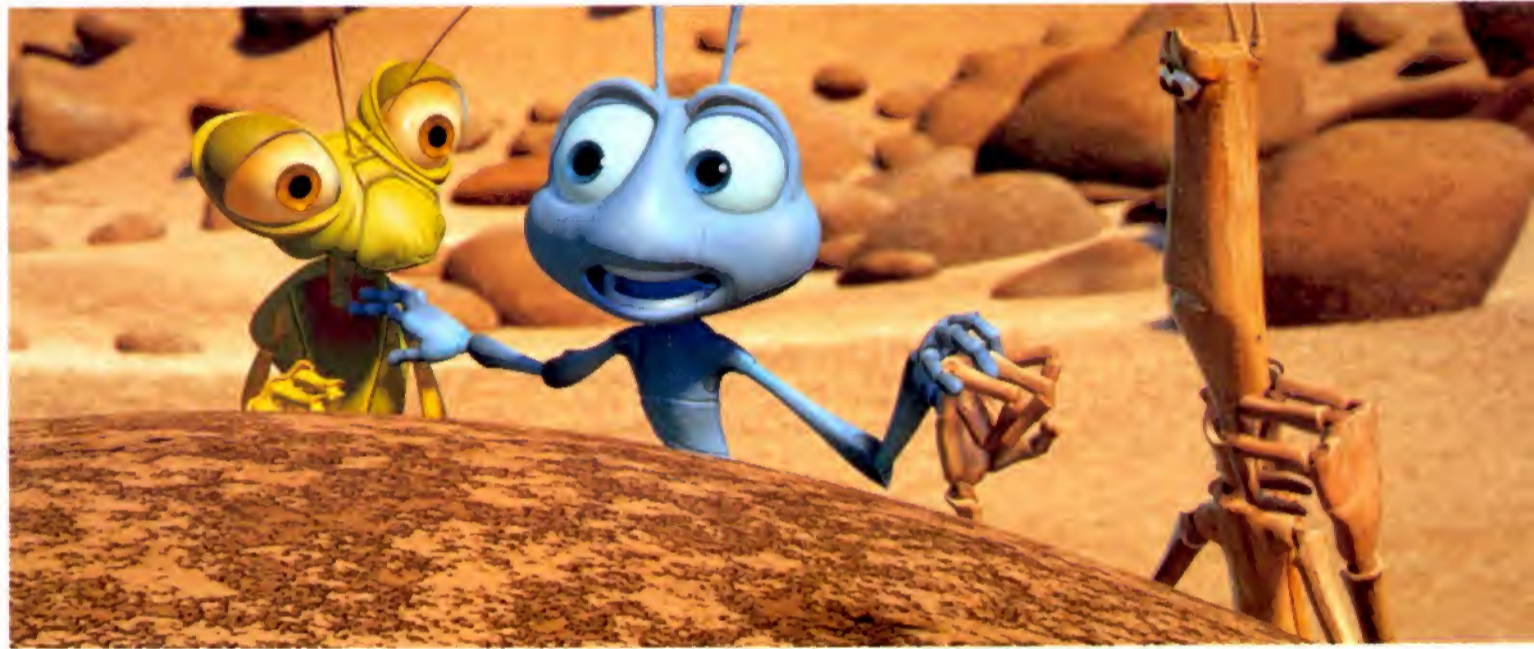
“As in *TOY STORY*, several of the bugs’ personalities are in direct contrast to their appearance. “It makes the character more interesting,” said art director Tia Kratter, “to have them look one way, and act another. In appearance, *Dim*, the rhino beetle is the most threatening, but when you hear him



Manny, formerly "Manto, the Magnificent" (Jonathan Harris) lectures Gypsy, his moth assistant. Right: Flik plans strategy with Manny and Sllm, the cerebral walking stick.

speaking, and see how he moves, he's just like a big baby Hughie. That's where the actor's voice, and the animation of the character is a big help, because it takes away the aggressiveness of their appearance."

In another contradiction, the behavior of several bugs was modified from what it would actually be in real life. "Manny, the praying mantis, would just devour all the other bugs, in reality" noted Pauley, "but we took certain liberties, so in our story he's not threatening at all. He's old, and you forget what type of bug he is, and just think about his character. The same thing applies to the grasshoppers. In reality most grasshoppers are not very threatening, so we had to direct them towards certain areas. We'd look for the really tough grasshoppers, and besides the elegant ones, we



found some that are very threatening. They're like the leather biker grasshoppers, so we'd take from that end of the spectrum when designing them. We also made sure they had four arms, because that's very monster-like and threatening."

In casting the actors to play the bugs, Lasseter and Stanton's major concern was not with getting big star names, but

who would be best for the role. "One of the nicest compliments we got," said Stanton, "is when [Disney Chairman] Michael Eisner saw the film half way through, and said, 'Well, you guys have certainly proved you don't need top name talent to make great characters.' We were happy he said that, because I don't like this idea that you just take out a golden

rolodex and get all these big names, and suddenly you're going to have a great character. Sure it can be an asset, and helps your marquee value, but it's not the thing that makes or breaks the character."

Lasseter also wanted to get actors who had not only the right vocal qualities, but who also possessed great acting ability. "One thing we found on A



Hopper and his marauding band of grasshoppers make demands at court of tiny ant princess Atta, voiced by Julie Louis-Dreyfuss (below).





In the city, Flik finds the would-be saviors of his ant colony at a run-down flea circus, as Heimlich, the caterpillar reacts in horror (above) when the act being performed by Francis, the ladybug and Slim, the walking stick (below) goes wrong.



BUG'S LIFE especially," observed Lasseter, "is that after you develop the character and figure out what kind of voice you want, when you bring in an actor for a recording session, the actor always records it a little bit different than how you expected. You go back, listen to it and put it in, and the next thing you know you're evolving your character personality wise—what they would say, even the design—to fit better with what the voice actor is giving you. It's very exciting. In casting, we sometimes created the character with an actor's voice in mind and then got that actor to do it. Jonathan Harris is one person like that. We kept thinking about him, knowing him as Dr. Smith from *LOST IN SPACE*, but not sure if he was still acting anymore. Then we saw him on a special about Irwin Allen, and realized he's still vibrant. We brought him in and he was just amazing. He brought so much to the character of Manny.

"There are other times where we had lists of actors, from

Ruth Lambert the casting director at Disney. We'd find all these amazing actors from Broadway, films or television, that we'd never have even thought of. Phyllis Diller came in to read for the Queen, and she was so funny and perfect, we redesigned the Queen's hairdo, to give her this crown, with flowers—it was just this big wild hairdo."

For the main character of

Flik, Lasseter originally thought of trying to get someone really big, before hearing Dave Foley, from *KIDS IN THE HALL* and *NEWS RADIO*. "He's not a big star, like Tom Hanks," admitted Lasseter, "but he's a remarkable actor. He brought so much heart to the role, and a quality that was exactly what we were hoping for; we called it the unlikely hero. Julie Louis-Dreyfus came in to read for Rosie, the spider,

CGI Heavy: Lasseter designed Hopper, leader of the grasshoppers, to be more bug-like, with four arms to make the foes more monstrous and threatening.



"We had to find ways so that the film would no be so predictable," said Lasseter. "The challenge was to go through the story and work with it so you still have surprises."

and as soon as we heard her, we said, 'that's Princess Atta,'" (who's training to take over the rule of the ant colony from the Queen).

To play Hopper, the intimidating leader of the grasshoppers, Lasseter selected Kevin Spacey, while Richard Kind of *SPIN CITY* plays Hopper's idiot brother, Molt. "Richard Kind, came in to read for a different part," revealed Lasseter, "and made the role he was reading so appealing, we thought, 'what about bringing him in as a grasshopper sidekick character.' So we elevated him to become Hopper's brother. In the end, what Richard Kind brought to the part made Molt so appealing we couldn't even kill him off. So he comes back in the epilogue, where P.T. Flea has hired him as a heavy lifting stage hand."

In contrast to *TOY STORY*, *A BUG'S LIFE* falls into the more traditional plotting modes of standard Disney animated fare. The basic set up consists of an improbable hero (Flik), who must overcome the odds to defeat a nasty villain (Hopper). "That was one of the challenges we faced," admitted Lasseter. "We had to find ways so the film would not be so predictable. Because once you start the movie, you know what the ending is going to be. Hopper is the bad guy, and it's inherently quite predictable, so the challenge was to go through the story and work with it so you still have surprises, and keep the audience wondering what's going to happen next."



Traversing a forest of clover (above) as Flik heads back to the colony with his bug army. Right: Arriving in the big city to seek salvation, warping the familiar from an ant's-eye-view.

One of the things Lasseter did to keep the story fresh, was to take everyday settings, that everyone was already familiar with, and show them to the audience in a completely different light. As Georgia O'Keefe, the artist known for her paintings of flowers once observed, "Nobody sees a flower, really—it's so small, and we haven't the time—and to see takes time." Expounding on that idea, Lasseter wanted to take familiar objects and show them to the audience, but from an ants point of view.

"Take a look at a three-leaf clover," exclaimed Lasseter. "Everyone knows what it is, this little thing you walk on, that's very small. Well, if you look at it from an ant's point of view, it would be the size of a very tall tree. You'd look up, and be under this canopy of gi-



ant clover leaves, with the sun back-lighting them. So next to where the ants live we have this forest of clovers. Then, we put their ant hill on this tiny island in the middle of a dry riverbed. To us, that's not terribly big, but from an ant's point of view it's like they're surrounded by the grand canyon. We wanted to get the feeling you have when you walk to the edge of the grand

canyon for the first time."

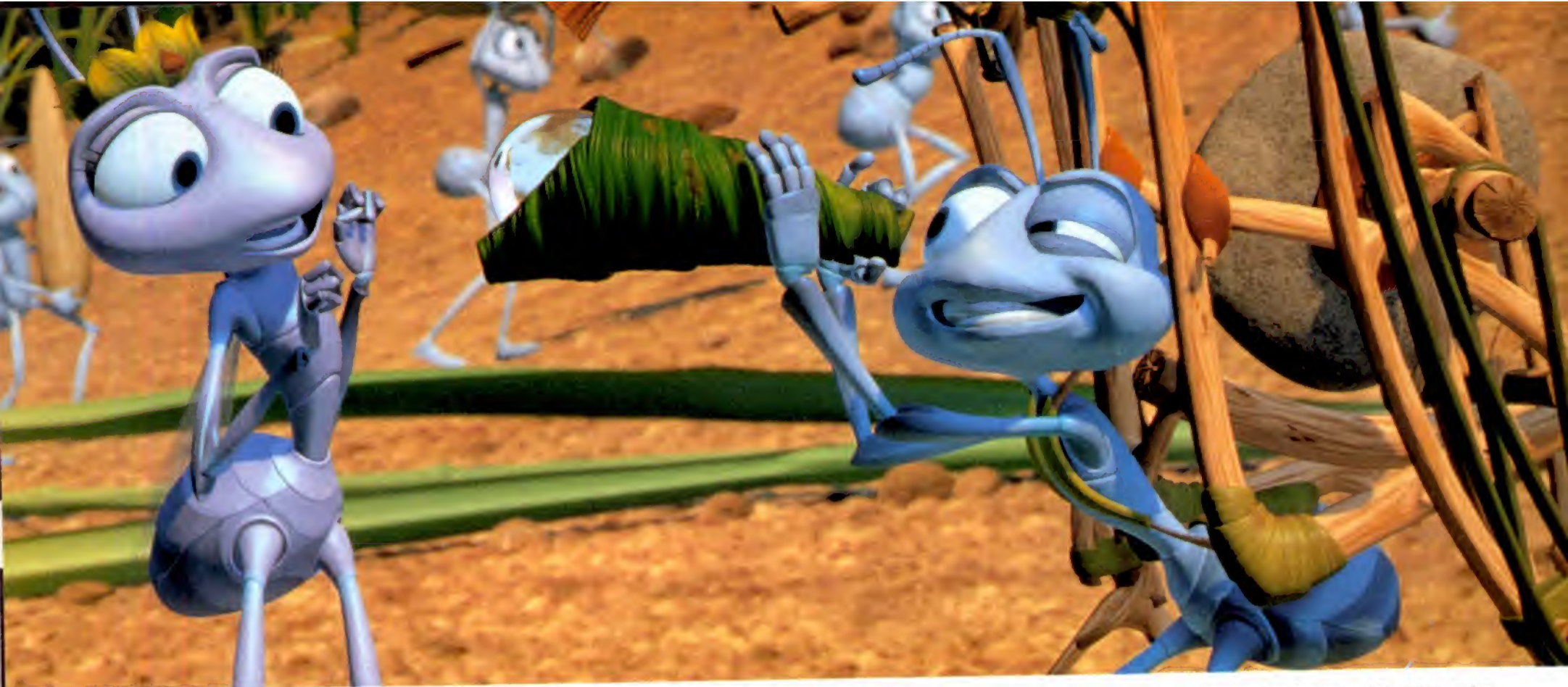
Lasseter also wanted to consistently remind audiences of this duality of size. "We didn't do that by just putting a can, or some other man-made object around all the time," said Lasseter, "but more by finding things in nature."

After the initial idea of a red ant had been discarded as unworkable, it was important to

get a color for the ants that would read well against the various settings. "One of our intentions was to make this an extremely colorful world," noted Lasseter. "So we tended to caricature the bugs, because we didn't want people to think we were trying to reproduce reality. With ant colonies, they have anthills and tunnels and we didn't want to go underground and

Francis, the ladybug, a guy who's no lady and therefore carries a big chip on his shoulder, voiced by Dennis Leary (below), rests an injured leg.





Preparing for war: Atta tries out a newly manufactured spyglass on Flik. Left: Defenders Heimlich and Silm wave to an expectant colony, **THE SEVEN SAMURAI** with bugs.



so they look just like checker cabs and they're running all over the place. Here's another example of taking something really familiar—a pile of trash—and making people look at it from a bug's point of view. Now it looks like something else that's familiar to people, which is Times Square. We wanted to take Flik [and the audience] and show 'Bug City,' as though Flik was a country boy getting off the bus at the Port Authority station in New York, and then suddenly here he is in Times Square. So you have the feeling of, 'Wow, this is the city!'"

In re-creating Times Square with discarded garbage, the opportunity presented itself for numerous product placements, which no doubt would have pleased many of Disney's promotional partners, but Lasseter

just have dirt, and these black and brown ants. It would be very dreary, so instead we chose to make the ants more colorful. The royal family is purple and the other ants are blue to beige. Then, we got inspired by these shader programs that make the ants slightly iridescent. Also, all the lighting underground is done with phosphorescent mushrooms, so you have these very

rich blues, greens and yellows when you're underground."

When Flik ventures into the outside world, he comes across hundreds of different insects in 'Bug city.' "The city is a real fun thing," enthused Lasseter, "because in reality it is an old beat up trailer, out in the countryside, with a wooden deck porch, and underneath the deck is just piles of trash. But we get

down to an insect's point of view, and go under the porch, and see the trash piled up in such a way that it looks just like Times Square in Manhattan, with all the labels of packages facing in, and there's fireflies flying around, and hundreds of bugs teaming back and forth. We created these beetles, that are yellow, with black and white little spots on their shells,

Hopper and his grasshoppers attack under the cover of fog. Left: Kevin Spacey voices Hopper, Lasseter's desire to get the best actors possible.



was adamant about not cheapening the movie with commercial tie-ins. "John feels very strongly about not doing product tie-ins," said producer Darla Anderson. "He wants to keep the movie as pristine as possible. I'm sure tons of companies would have loved to put their products in the scene, but we didn't even talk to anyone about it. There's no Nike tennis shoes, or anything like that. All the discarded trash is done with made-up products, using in-jokes, like the art directors name, or kids names. We do have a LION KING box, because it does look like Times Square, so that's just our little homage to THE LION KING."

After Flik arrives in Bug City, he goes to a bar, where he first discovers the circus troupe, now drowning their sorrows, having been fired from P.T. Flea's circus. The bar is actually an old rusty can, with cockroach bartenders, and bottle caps as tables. "Roaches were a natural for the bar," said Pauley, "because who *wouldn't* you want serving you your food: a roach, naturally—it's perfectly disgusting."

Also, since insects can walk on walls, Cone extended the tables all the way up the sides of the can making the set more insect friendly. "In the city shots it was a lot easier for people to think of gags using human-sized props," noted Cone. "The problem is, when you play with human props, and how these tiny characters will interact with them, you run into the issue of scale. Most of the props are a huge size, relative to an insect, so you have to start carefully cheating things, to get recognizable objects that could actually have a function for an insect. We used everything from thimbles and thumbtacks, to matches and old nails and it worked beautifully."

"In these Times Square shots," added Lasseter, "there's over 150 characters that are all hand animated. It was just doing bits of animation for all these characters, to fill the street up. It's a really fun sequence that's loaded with all types of bugs."

Noted Pauley, "We really got a lot of mileage out of a few bugs, because we were able to



Art director Bob Pauley poses with a model of Dim, the rhino beetle. Though in appearance the most threatening, Dim was given the personality of a big baby.

modify the computer models to get all the different bugs we needed. At Hopper's hideout we had mosquitoes, and then we took those models and just modified them to make the dragonflies."

While most of the insect characters were stylized to be more humanoid than real bugs, that was not the case with one phylum of insects: the grasshoppers. "We wanted to keep some of the ickyness of insects in their design," explained Lasseter, "and make sure that they were very scary. The main bad guy is Hopper, and he's got a sidekick, Thumper, who's like an uncontrollable pet. In designing them we really tapped into a lot of insect-like behavior grasshoppers do that's a little creepy. They have phenomenal detail to them, and they're generally less appealing than the other characters."

In fact, the grasshoppers were getting so intense, Stanton said they needed to lighten them up a bit. "To do that, we gave Hopper what we call his Billy Carter brother," laughs Stanton. "He's sort of an idiot brother, Molt. We had to make him his brother, because Hopper would have killed anyone else in his gang who talks like Molt does. So we made him a blood relative and then put in a line, 'I promised Mother on her deathbed I wouldn't kill you. If I hadn't done that, I would kill you!' Molt is always shedding his skin, and he's very funny."

Pauley likes to compare the grasshoppers to a gang of mo-

torcycle outlaws, and early on in story development, he watched THE WILD ONE, the Marlon Brando cult classic about a gang of cyclists who invade and occupy a small town in California. "We looked at that more as a way to approach the grasshoppers' behavior," explained Pauley. "But we also made them like a bunch of Harley-Davidson bikers. They fly in formation, and they do a kind of kick-start and rev-up their wings before taking off. We tried to adhere to the design of bugs whenever we could, so for grasshoppers, they have these outer wing cases that cover the more delicate inner wings, which is what they use to fly with."

building the detailed models needed for both the settings and the characters was one of the first tasks facing head technical director Bill Reeves. "We had characters that were not bipeds," noted Reeves, "which added a great deal of complexity to our models. Then, because this organic world was going to be so rich and elaborate, we ended-up building the characters in much more detail than we did on TOY STORY. If you put something really simple next to something really complicated it tends to stand out. We needed to have a good blend, so every aspect of the character and every object within the background would fit together. Then, we got the animators input into the models we were building, and one of the



"We like to have little messages in our movies," said Lasseter. "But we hate hitting people over the head with it... Yes people do change, but not a great deal."

things they asked for were a lot more controls. They may not have used them all, but they were there if they needed them. That way the animators could really plus their animation whenever they needed to."

Although the animators liked having more controls, they didn't necessarily enjoy animating characters with six or more appendages. "It was just insane," said supervising animator Glenn McQueen. "It might not seem like a big difference, but having four arms, instead of two is very different. Just creatively, you have to come up with something for a four arm critter to do that's going to be easy to read. Then, there's the bookkeeping challenge, because now you've got three times the number of limbs to animate. An easy way out would be to just copy what the upper limbs were doing onto the lower ones, but I don't think that's going to look terribly good."

One saving grace for the animators was the fact that all the ants were designed with only two arms and two legs, making them considerably easier to animate than the circus bugs or grasshoppers. "It was great that they made that creative design choice," admitted McQueen. "because as an animator, I'm the one who has to make the character move. One of the reasons for making Flik and the other ants anthropomorphic, was to make it easier for audiences to identify with them. It was also a way to differentiate the ants from the grasshoppers,



JOHN LASSETER

The director of A BUG'S LIFE and TOY STORY on stretching the creative limits of CGI storytelling.

By Lawrence French

With the release of *A BUG'S LIFE*, it's interesting to note that while it's only director John Lasseter's second film, he has already taken on an almost legendary role at Pixar, as well as the industry at large. Lasseter's vision is based somewhat on the populist notions espoused by Frank Capra, one of his favorite directors. It also provides inspiration for all of Lasseter's collaborators, from chairman Steve Jobs, and co-director Andrew Stanton, down to the aspiring young animators, who have just walked in the door.

Strangely enough, one of the subtle lessons Lasseter hopes to get across in *A BUG'S LIFE*, mirrors his own effect on his colleagues. "We like to have little messages in our movies," said Lasseter, "but we hate hitting people over the head with it. But in most people's lives they don't inherently make gigantic growths. Yes, people do change, but not a great deal. They are who they are. But one thing you really can do is tremendously influence the world around you. Flik is like that. He's not a typical hero, in fact, to be honest, he's a geek. He changes a little within himself, but he changes the world around him phenomenally. In the beginning he's looked down upon, but by the end he's recognized, because he really does change everybody. It's a very special thing. I think it's a lesson to be learned, that no matter how geeky or stupid you might be, you really do influence a lot of people."



Lasseter (l) and his creative team on *TOY STORY*, animator-turned-director Pete Docter, storyboard artist Joe Ranft, and co-director Andrew Stanton (r).

From the outset, Lasseter wanted to have an epic quality to *A BUG'S LIFE*, which grew substantially more complex over the two-plus years the film was in production. "In that time span," said Lasseter, "our technology can develop tremendously. And when we start, we don't want to handcuff ourselves by the state of the current technology. So, at a certain point, we come in and start thinking about what we'll need to make the story, and ask ourselves, 'where do we need to start researching?' In every story we've made, there's always something that's never been done before. So we get our technical directors to start thinking about things we don't know how to do yet. That takes a tremendous amount of time and research, but we also save some of those shots to the end of our production schedule. In *A BUG'S LIFE* the first things

we did were the circus sequences, and the last things we're doing are the Times Square-Bug city shots. Over the two years between those sequences, you can see a tremendous growth in complexity, due to our constantly improving technology."

This pull and tug between the artistic and technical sides of the medium have led to one of Lasseter's fundamental work philosophies: "Art challenges technology and technology inspires art." Noted Lasseter, "We come up with an idea," explains Lasseter, "and then we challenge the technology to come up with a way to make it happen. When the technology starts making images we've never seen before, that inspires you to say, 'let's do this.' It's a constant openness to be challenged and inspired, so in the end you're doing things you've never seen before. That's why the

story is so important, because that's what I always revert back to. Something may look really great, but it wouldn't work for the story, so we can't do it.

"Sometimes there's some painful choices that have to be made, but most of the time we see something amazing, and then evolve the story. A case in point: we were doing a tree on the island where the ants live. It's just one gnarly tree coming up out of the ground, and while they were modeling it, we never had any intentions to use it in the story, except for this one knot hole where the ants hide this bird scarecrow they've built. But we started looking around in the tree, and it was so beautiful. There were these branches everywhere, so we took the whole climax of the film and used the tree for that.

"Hopper gets loose, grabs Flik, and flies away with him. The flying circus bugs take off after him, and we have this exciting chase scene through the branches of the tree. It's lost all its leaves, so it's just branches and it's at night-time, in the middle of a big rainstorm, with thunder, lightning and rain splashing all around them. That's an example of the art being inspired by the technology. It didn't change the story, but placed it in a new setting we would have never thought of using. As it was originally storyboarded, it was a sequence of them just flying. It wasn't until we had the intricate model of the tree that we thought, 'let's put it in there.' There's more things to dodge around and it's much more exciting that way."



Flik, Lasseter's "unlikely" hero, sets off on his quest amid clover trees, a "geek" who transforms the world around him.

Although *A BUG'S LIFE* is set in a very caricatured world, Lasseter wanted to maintain a believability to the insects' environment. To do that he looked at numerous documentary and nature studies of insects, including *MICROCOSMOS*. "One of the things we became aware of," noted Lasseter, "is that when you photograph a world this small, the camera has a shallow depth of field. The little bug is in focus, and the branches in front of it and the leaves behind it are out of focus. So that was something we wanted to use in the movie. People don't realize it, but there is a familiarity in the way insects are photographed, which is due to the limitations of the motion picture camera. If they made cameras and lenses that were the size of insects, then it would feel like just as if you were photographing a human. But because you're trying to focus on a small bug, with a human size camera, you get a very shallow focus. So it's very well thought out, from the standpoint of thinking of the audience, and trying to put them into this very believable world.

"With our system we have the capability to create either a tremendous depth of field, or a shallow depth of field. So even though this is a wide screen movie, that's epic in its staging and vistas, we still have times when things are right in front of a character, or right behind a character and they're out of fo-

cus. When Flik climbs up a dandelion and is about to parachute across the riverbed, he's in focus, but the dandelion branches around him are not. This goes back to the beginnings of Pixar, where we analyzed the different aspects of our technology and imagery, and then tried to mimic the limitations of the motion picture camera—because that's what the audience is used to seeing. If they don't see motion blur, or depth of field, it doesn't look as real to them. That's part of the charm about what we do, because although we create an obvious fantasy world—one that doesn't exist (and we never pretend it does)—we maintain the believability of that world, with motion-blur, the beautiful lighting, the shadows, and the different reflections and refractions. All of those things combined, help maintain the believability of this world. It puts the audience in the place of knowing it's not real, but saying, 'it sure looks real.' And with *A BUG'S LIFE* it's a step beyond what we did with *TOY STORY*, because we've put such a tremendous amount of effort into the believability of this environment"

To further explore the world from an ants point of view, Lasseter had his crew create a miniature camera. "We shot a lot of footage on this bugcam," explained Lasseter. "It's a little tiny camera on a stick, with little wheels attached. We took this camera and videotaped all sorts

of things right outside my office and in the park across the way. Leaves on the ground and different insects. From that, we realized how beautiful the world is on this level, because it's all translucent. I thought, 'imagine a world where all the buildings around you are made of stained glass.' It became so exciting. When leaves are backlit, their color is so vibrant, and when they're in shadow, they're darker. So that really inspired us—the potential of getting these beautiful saturated colors and light—because we really wanted to make this an absolutely beautiful film."

Of course, as the filmmaker of such a beauty, Lasseter has the ability to influence not just his colleagues, but millions of people around the world. "That's something I take tremendous responsibility in," said Lasseter. "I'm fully aware of how we do affect people. I believe filmmakers should take that responsibility very seriously, and I think there's an awful lot of irresponsibility in films, especially in films intended for kids. I'm a father of five, and every movie I make, I want to be able to take my teenager. I also want to feel good about taking my three year old. It might scare him a little bit, but every good Disney film did that. But there's also humor, there's heart, you laugh, you cry. But I believe you can also make a family film that is not just for kids." □



"I'm fully aware of how we do affect people," said Lasseter. "I think there's an awful lot of irresponsibility in films, especially in films intended for kids."

because the benign little ants have only two arms, while the evil grasshoppers have four arms."

Posing another problem was the high number of characters that would appear in many of the shots. Unlike in traditional 2-D animation, where several animators might work on different characters in a single shot, on *A BUG'S LIFE* one animator normally would animate every character within a scene. "We have this circus troupe of nine characters that move through most of the story," stated McQueen, "so it was not out of line to have eight or nine characters in a shot. When we were giving out shots to the ani-

David Hyde Pierce gives voice to Slim, the cerebral walking stick, with a taped performance used as a guide.





“One of my big concerns is to make this a studio where people can have creative satisfaction,” said Lasseter. “I want people to be proud to have worked on a movie.”

maters, we hated giving people shots with all those characters, but it was like, ‘sorry, there’s no one else.’ One thing we did to help was making sure people had enough memory on their computer so they could bring up all these characters at once. This way, they wouldn’t have to load one or two characters at a time, animate it, then unload it. We had the fastest SGI’s you could have on a desktop, and each one was maxed-out in terms of memory.”

With such intricate characters to model and animate, along with the use of elaborate backgrounds that are constantly in motion, it might seem as though Pixar bit off more than it could chew making *A BUG’S LIFE*. “We did,” admitted Lasseter, “but that’s really been the whole history of Pixar. All our short films were overly ambitious for their day, as was *TOY STORY*. When you get down to the core of who we are at Pixar, we’re constantly challenging ourselves. We don’t want to keep doing the same old thing and we’ll never do the same old thing. We’re constantly pushing the outside of the envelope.”

Surprisingly enough, the staff of animators and technical leads at Pixar all work without employment contracts. With the demand for animators at an all time high, this might seem to be a questionable policy, but Pixar has not only managed to keep their staff in place, but has also become, according to chairman



Supervising animators Rich Quade and Glenn McQueen (r). Noted McQueen, “We used the fastest SGI’s and each was still maxed-out in terms of memory.”

Steve Jobs, “one of the hottest places to work in the industry.”

“There was a whole period when the industry was in turmoil,” said Ed Catmull, Pixar’s Executive Vice-President, “and everyone was moving around from studio to studio. During that time we lost only two people, so we’re probably the most stable studio around. One of our philosophies is, if we’re doing something wrong, people will complain about it, and we need to fix that right away. If people are under contract, you don’t have to worry about them until the end of the contract, which means they may think, ‘maybe I should go somewhere else.’ We want people to be working here because they like it. Our salaries are not higher, but they’re competitive, and we want to have a good environment. Then, if somebody wants to leave, it’s okay. But I believe, if you look at the quality of our people, I think it’s the highest in the industry, and we didn’t get into that leadership position by doing a lot of raiding from other studios. We got there by taking smart people and training them.”

“What happened was the studios got in this whole raiding frenzy, and our view was we’d be better off by hiring people from outside the industry and then training them. We have a few people who came from other studios, but not a lot. If you start trying to steal the best person from some other studio, all you do is end up in a battle, and then you become open game. That doesn’t do

anybody any good. All this raiding that occurred several years ago was very damaging, because it hurt the economics of the whole industry.”

Perhaps the most important benefit that comes out of working at Pixar is getting to share in the creative vision. “One of my big concerns,” said Lasseter, “is to make this a studio where people can have creative satisfaction. I really want people to be proud to have worked on a movie and to be able to put their own input into it. Years from now, I want people to say proudly, ‘I worked on *TOY STORY*,’ or ‘I worked on *A BUG’S LIFE*.’ In the past, I’ve worked really hard on commercials and other films, and in the end you look at it, and say, ‘I killed myself for that?’ That makes you a little less willing to do it the next time around, and everyone here works really hard on these movies. These films are not made by one person alone, but by everyone working together.”

Reflecting this creative openness, is the running of dailies, when all the animators and tech leads are assembled and can express their ideas and input. “It’s always about the best idea winning out,” explained Stanton. “Whether it comes from John or the janitor, we just accept it. During dailies we strive to make the most of people’s comments, because many times it’s not necessarily a solution, but the fact that someone is reacting negatively.”

Throughout the production

of *A BUG’S LIFE*, preview screenings were held to help gauge how the story would play for audiences. During the very first preview, it was still possible to make changes to any major problems that presented themselves. “There was a section of the movie that was initially really slow,” said film editor Lee Unkrich. “We could tell by the reaction of the audience, especially the kids. They started getting fidgety and not paying as much attention, and we were at a point where we could go in and make corrections. We tightened up that section of the movie and did some minor changes to the characters. The previews we’re doing now are just to tweak little things, because the movie is pretty much done at this point. We’ll have a preview after we record the score, just to see how it plays with an audience, and then we’ll have a last preview once all the sound is finished, so we can test it with an audience and see if it’s too loud or soft in places.”

During an early preview in Orange County, the movie was loaded with temp music from many of John Williams scores, including *1941*, *STAR WARS* and *INDIANA JONES*. “We needed a theme for Flik,” explained Stanton, and it turned out that the Lex Luther theme from *SUPERMAN* fit well, because it was one of the only scores where they did that theme about seven ways, using different arrangements. We would have liked to use John Williams, and actually considered him at the beginning, but his schedule is very tight. Also, we had a great relationship with Randy Newman, who scored *TOY STORY* and thought, ‘well now that we made this foundation with him, why screw it up.’”

Hopefully, Randy Newman will come up with a better musical accompaniment for *A BUG’S LIFE* than he managed to provide for *TOY STORY*—which rather unbelievably was nominated for an Academy Award. But as the late Bernard Herrmann noted upon resigning from the Academy, ‘there’s no point belonging to an organization in which one is judged by one’s inferiors instead of one’s



Astounding the audience with the familiar from an ant's point of view: the ants sound the alarm (top) and Filk climbs to the top of a dandelion in order to get a better view (right).

peers.' Apparently, one of the problems Newman encountered while working on TOY STORY, was his lack of familiarity in scoring animation. He seemed to think every on screen action or pratfall had to be matched musically—as if he were scoring a Mickey Mouse cartoon. As a result, when Lasseter met with Newman to discuss musical themes for A BUG'S LIFE, he expressed his strong desire for leitmotifs for all the main characters. "We wanted recognizable themes and more memorable melodies," explained Stanton. "That put a lot more pressure on Randy to do a different type of score for this film. It's grander, and he's using a larger orchestra, so it's not as jazzy and urban as TOY STORY was. He's only done 20 minutes so far, but I think it's the best music I've ever heard



him do. We didn't have huge expectations on him, so this has been a really happy surprise."

Lasseter is pleased with the final result. "Primarily, we make movies here for ourselves," he said. "There's very hip people here at Pixar. I'm not, but other people are. We have families, and take great pride in making a film where people will be proud to take

their parents, or friends or kids to see. That's important to me because everybody really kills themselves working on these movies.

"Also, I want the audience not to feel cheated. When they go to see the movie, they are giving you 90 minutes of their life, and I want them to think, 'that was worth it.' I take responsibility for that. I want

them to feel it wasn't a waste of their time." Indeed, it would appear unlikely that Lasseter will have much to worry about on that count. Having devoted four years of his life making A BUG'S LIFE into a richly detailed "epic of miniature proportions," it seems more likely that he'll be celebrated once again, for creating another milestone in animation history. □



Hopper gives the ant queen, voiced by Phyllis Diller (below) an offer she can't refuse, a recommendation of Ruth Lambert, Disney's casting director.



PHANTASM IV

Behind-the-scenes, filming the latest sequel in the long-running horror series.

By Denise Dumars

Reggie kicks ass. Mike stops being a victim. The Tall Man leads us on a journey through time and space. In other words, in *PHANTASM IV: OBLIVION*, which hits video shelves in October, business as usual for the popular movie series.

Bill Thornbury reprises his role as Jody, Mike's deceased older brother and like a Dickensian ghost takes Mike on a tour of the Tall Man's past, present, and future. Thornbury, who now lives and teaches music in Fresno, came back to L.A. to reprise his role as the ghost of Mike's big brother. "Is this really happening? Is this a dream?" Bannister said. "You never really know. But after people see this picture, and know the story we're telling, they will have a much clearer concept of what the *PHANTASM* storyline is all about."

Noted Michael Baldwin, who plays Mike, of director Don Coscarelli's script, "Don's using flashbacks from the first film, scenes that no one's ever seen before, that were taken out due to the length of the film." This is supposed to flesh out the story, and add more information toward clearing up the riddle of the series.

"My plan is to answer all the questions that have been left unanswered for so long about the Phantasm world," said Don Coscarelli, the series' creator, writer, and director. "Ever since we've had these sites on the internet where we can get direct feedback from the fans, we've heard that one of the problems with *PHANTASM III* was that it left everyone hanging. The fans like a little more closure. So I've decided to really wrap



Reggie Bannister, actor and musician, again plays Reggie, the action hero pitted against the Tall Man, on location in Camarillo, California, taking a break.

up and answer—pretty much finish off—this story arc of *PHANTASM*. There are some other things that could be explored in the future, but the basic core story of Mike, Reggie, and the Tall Man is all going to come to a head in this one."

What perhaps has made *PHANTASM* the cult favorite that it is, so much so that it has gained a place in the E! Entertainment website's list of top ten horror films, is the dreamlike quality of it. What's real? What's not real? That's what the fans like about the films.

Mike's relationship to the Tall Man—which was touched upon tantalizingly in *PHANTASM III: LORD OF THE DEAD*, is further explored in this episode. "We're really making an attempt to loop back to part one—explaining that picture in more depth," said Coscarelli. "We shot a really extensive original sequence, quite a bit of material and from that we culled *PHANTASM*. Through the years I've hung on to this footage, because

I wanted to use it somehow and I'm going to use some of it to loop the story back in time."

Coscarelli described scenes that were never seen, shot in the original footage, that appear in the *PHANTASM IV*. "We have several action scenes involving Reggie and Mike battling the Tall Man. They shot him and melted him, they hung him from a tree by the neck—these are some pretty visceral sequences. And also there's some character development that ties in with where these characters are in the '90's."

Angus Scrimm, dressed in 19th century garb in flashback scenes, talked about his character, the Tall Man: "We discover a little of his background, pre-*PHANTASM*. It gives me an opportunity to give him a little more shading. There are more subtleties. He's fleshed out."

Does the Tall Man finally die in this movie? "Stunt man Bob Ivy has a spectacular death as the Tall Man," Scrimm said. "He's the guy who did the ter-

rific hearse crash in *PHANTASM III*. As a result, he's stunt coordinator of this picture. But to tell you the truth about the nature of the Tall Man, until we see the completed film I just don't know."

There's been a connection between the Tall Man and Mike since the very first movie. "The relationship deepens in an intriguing way—more complexities are revealed. The final answer, as far as the interpretation of it, will be up to the viewer. Mike [Baldwin] and I have had fun working with each other, because we have several scenes we've been able to play with. But I don't know which ones Don's going to use—we've played some scenes several different ways. That's why I don't know how the picture's going to turn out—because he has so many different options. I think this is the strongest Phantasm script to date."

And just how do fans feel about the Tall Man? "Judging from the fan mail that I get, they have an affection for the Tall Man," said Scrimm. "They're very fond of him. I responded to Boris Karloff's creature, Lugosi's Dracula, in a similar way. They were charismatic. I play two characters in this film—the other is a character in the Civil War. We'll see if the fans think I have any charisma at all as that character!"

Stunt coordinator Bob Ivy is much more than just a stunt man on this film. Noted Ivy, "We did one scene where I stood next to the hearse and we had three bombs around me which we exploded and I was engulfed by the fireball. Then we set up a second explosion, with me not there, so that when we cut the two together you see

PHANTASM 1999

Oscar-winner Roger Avary on his pet sequel.

By Denise Dumars

Roger Avary! You've just won an Academy Award! Now what're you going to do?

"I'm going to write a PHANTASM movie!"

Right after his Academy Award win for the script of PULP FICTION, Avary called PHANTASM creator Don Coscarelli with an idea for a script. "Ever since I saw the original movie, I've had this idea for a sequel. I turned down so many jobs to write that script, because I believed in following my heart rather than cashing in on everything. So I wrote a PHANTASM script."

In Avary's version, the east coast is all New York, the west coast is all California, and the "flyover" zone is now the walled-in "plague zone," where the Tall Man's victims live (if you can call it living) in exile.

"You can go in but you can't come out. Sort of like 'Escape from the Bible Belt.' The plague is a by-product of [the Tall Man's] compressing people into dwarves. They have this yellow blood, and well...."

It's a "little bit PHANTASM and a little bit DAWN OF THE DEAD," Avary continued. "You can cash in your citizenship if you're on the lam and go into the plague zone. The plague—it's called the Bag Plague, and the victims are called Baggers—it's transmitted by the yellow blood. Whatever that stuff touches gets the bag plague."

"Our story begins with Reggie knowing that Mike is in the plague zone. The Tall Man has him in the Mormon mausoleum—the largest mausoleum on the planet—which he's turned into his base of operations. The government has come up with a plan to put the Tall Man

out of business, and the group will go in simultaneously with Reggie. But it's Reggie who knows how to deal with him, and they finally turn to Reg for help. They go through the catacombs and through the Spacegate into the Tall Man's dimension, and then, well, you'll just have to see when it's made."

Although his version of the PHANTASM oeuvre has yet to find a buyer, other genre offerings by Avary are available. "MR. STITCH plays sporadically on Sci Fi channel. It's out on video, but it's difficult to find. It was designed to be a TV series, along the lines of THE PRISONER. Highly abstract, slightly existential. We started making it and Rutger Hauer and I had some friction. Then without Rutger, our series sale fell apart."

An adaptation by Avary of that original monster tale, BEOWULF, for DreamWorks, is in the works. For more information on his current projects, you can contact Avary's home page on the Internet: www.avary.com. □

Avary, garbed for his Civil War cameo, has written the ultimate series entry, now in development.



Angus Scrimm as the Tall Man with Michael Baldwin, the child star of the 1979 original, filming in a real mausoleum in Compton, California in November 1997.

the Tall Man disappear in the fireball."

Not only does he get set on fire as he stands in for the Tall Man, but he also plays a "demon cop." "I play the Tall Man's henchman. The real trooper is locked in the trunk! I turn into this demon and have a big fight with Reggie, and he locks me into the patrol car and the car blows up after Reggie throws a flare into the gas tank. I come out of the car on fire, and flop around a little bit, and fall over dead!"

At Angelus Abbey in Compton, scenes involving Mike, Jody, and the Tall Man were shot insight a fabulous Gothic mausoleum, one of three on the property. Parts of PHANTASM III and other films, including HOT SHOTS PART DEUX, were filmed there.

PHANTASM is a film series that has its own following. "Our fans are faithful and devoted, and end up serving us by continuing to contribute," noted

Scrimm. On the set, helping with script supervision, is former mortician Kristen Deem, who also acts as Scrimm's personal assistant. She wrote a fan letter to him after seeing the first film as a child. This developed into a life-long friendship. She has helped out on two of the films so far.

Guy Thorpe, hearse coordinator for the series, also began as a fan. A member of Phantom Coaches, a car club for hearse enthusiasts, he has helped supply hearses to PHANTASM III and IV. Noted Thorpe, "We recycled the pink hearse, which was used in PHANTASM III, a '68 Cadillac. It's now a hearse of another color, you might say: we painted it black."

With such devoted fans, who needs a big budget? Perhaps to afford KNB, the celebrated special effects studio, which coordinated special effects makeup as well as the famous silver sphere effects for which PHANTASM is best known. □

The Wisdom of Crocodiles

A poetic reinvention of vampire myths by Hong Kong director Po Chih Leong.

By Alan Jones

"All the best films have touches of fantasy in them," said director Po Chih Leong about the \$5 million feature he made at London's famous Ealing Studios in late 1997. "But I've never made a genre movie before," continued the Hong Kong-based director. "And it has been an interesting experience. How do you take what is essentially an art movie, give it a fast pace and make it commercial? I've been very conscious of that and [it's] why I feel I've created something quite new and different." Goldwyn Films has not yet set a U.S. release date for the film.

Leong took the title of his film from a famous quote by poet Francis Bacon—"It is the wisdom of crocodiles that shed tears when they would devour." His movie stars Jude (GATTACA) Law, Elina (AMATEUR) Lowensohn, Timothy (GOTHIC) Spall and Kerry (SHALLOW GRAVE) Fox. The story of a sexually assertive and successful man who goes to extreme lengths to seduce a woman apparently resistant to his charms might not sound too different to any other straight romantic drama. However, the twist in this tale is that Law is a metaphysical vampire; someone who cannot survive without the sustaining love of the perfect woman.

"Essentially, this is a dark romance, but with genre elements from thrillers and horror films," explained co-producer David Lascelles. "It takes the idea of a man who cannot live without a woman—literally—and shows love as destruction and obsession." Leong added, "Jude Law plays someone who is very cautious in life, who likes to control every situation, but has unfortunate relationships with women to say the least. Then, when he meets the perfect love, he suffers for it because ultimately he must



Jude Law as Leong's "metaphysical vampire," who cannot survive without the sustaining love of his perfect woman, Elina Lowensohn, a Goldwyn release.

destroy it because of his craving. So searching for perfect love is a foolish idea, right?"

It was in 1986 when he was making PING PONG, a Channel Four film about the Chinese community in Britain, that Po Chih Leong was introduced to his other co-producer Carolyn Choa and the long road to THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES began. Leong said, "At that time Carolyn [the wife of Anthony Minghella, Oscar-winning director of THE ENGLISH PATIENT] was working at the British Board of Film Classification [the U.K.'s censor] and asked me to give a lecture on violence in Hong Kong cinema. We became firm friends and, in 1992, she introduced me to Paul Hoffman who was trying to write his first novel. I asked to read it and was taken by one of the specific story strands about this man's quest for perfection. I told him I thought it would make a great movie and he wrote a script on spec which then took us four years to finance."

It was British National Lottery money that kicked the project into active life with Goldwyn Films entering the financial package for U.S. distribution rights. "What particularly struck me about the story was Paul's idea that all our emotions exist in the

blood stream," said Leong. "It was inspired by an ailment his father had which caused him to urinate very painful crystals. Paul took this to the next logical step. What if these crystals represented bodily anger, love, malice, goodness, jealousy, envy? I think all the best vampire stories are the romantic ones and Paul's story adds new layers and subtexts to the genre allowing it to expand even further."

The genre elements are being played down in THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES to the point of non-existence in the mainstream press because Leong wants the vampiric twists to be something of a surprise. But the

film's inclusion in these very pages means it's impossible to discuss the subject matter without revealing them. Leong said, "The tone is a difficult one to achieve and that's why we are taking great care in the editing process. We don't have any of the usual vampire trappings. He doesn't fly around like a bat, hop like the Hong Kong MR. VAMPIRE series, go to sleep in a coffin at dawn or flee from garlic and crucifixes. It's far more metaphorical—we peel the layers off to discover who exactly Jude's character is, but in the end he remains as much a mystery as ever. It's subtly Hitchcockian in its creepiness."

He added, "We do show one victim having her blood sucked. We are not avoiding the blood-letting and it is graphic when it occurs. However, I do feel once you've shown it, you don't have to do it again, as the inference will play much worse in the audience's minds when you give them a hint. What you don't reveal is often more important than what you do. I'm not interested in making a psycho-shocker. I don't want Jude Law lunging at his victims. I want people to be scared that a seemingly normal person can harbor such unknown

continued on page 60

Adds new layers to the vampire mythos

WISDOM OF CROCODILES

Zenith Productions, Goldwyn Films, Film Foundry Partners & Entertainment Film Distributors, in association with The Arts Council of England, present a Zenith Film. Producers: David Lascelles & Carolyn Choa. Director: Po Chih Leong. Writer: Paul Hoffman. Music: John Lunn & Orlando Gough. Executive producers: Scott Meek, Dorothy Berwin & Nigel Stafford Clark. 11/98. 105 minutes.

Steven Grlszc.....Jude Law
 Anne Levels.....Elina Lowensohn
 Heale.....Timothy Spall
 Maria Vaughan.....Kerry Fox
 Roche.....Jack Davenport
 Martin.....Colin Salmon

by Alan Jones

Doing something different with the vampire myth is a Holy Grail for genre directors. Getting rid of the more laughable aspects of the folklore legends (the garlic, the bats, the cloak, the coffin, the stake-through-the-heart, etc.) while retaining the decidedly more glamorous, and malleable themes of decadence, romance and eternal life has defeated many great artists. Even if Transylvania turns hip California for the COUNT YORGA movies, or the night creatures change race in BLACULA, or turn bisexual as in the Hammer Karnstein trilogy, the vampire tale remains the one horror strand crying out for redefinition, yet rarely achieving it even under the expert guidance of such perceptive directors as Neil (INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE) Jordan and Abel (THE ADICTION) Ferrara.

But every now and again someone does it with amazing success: Katherine Bigelow in NEAR DARK, Harry Kumel in DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS, George Romero in MARTIN. Now add Po Chih Leong to the short list. The Hong Kong director's sophisticated take on the undead tradition is massively stylish and instantly beguiling in a rare way indeed. Leong's fantasy is a brilliantly evocative melding of the best of the West with the visual feast of the East—an orientally tinged masterpiece, set in a weirdly surreal London, and infused with deep philosophical questions about love, life and humanity. Permeated with a deliciously melancholy Hitchcock cynicism and a stunning range of unexpected horror elements, Leong's dark romance is a delicate delight to be savored.

To all appearances, Bulgarian medical researcher Steven Grlszc (Jude Law) is a man who has



The psychic vampire in WISDOM OF CROCODILES (Jude Law) holds up one of the emotional crystals he disgorges after feasting on the blood of his victims.

everything. He's handsome, successful, witty, generous and he can effortlessly seduce women by winning their complete trust. He needs to in every respect. Because when he comes to kill them and suck the blood out of their veins, the vital fluid must be saturated with all the positive emotions his victims feel for him.

You see, Steven quite literally cannot live without a woman's love. When the body of his latest conquest (Kerry Fox) is found in the sea, the police begin to close in on him, just as he's about to begin his insidious seduction process again on the asthmatic Anne Levels (Elina Lowensohn). But Anne proves to be a more difficult prospect than he first imagined—and then the impossible happens. He actually falls in complete love with her and, because he keeps delaying the moment of murderous truth, his health rapidly deteriorates. Cuts on his body won't heal and his demeanor becomes deathly. Will he finally give in to his true nature and live? Or will he give in to the alien emotion he feels and make the ultimate sacrifice for his undying devotion?

That you are never sure what Steven will do until the final gripping scenes where he hurtles up and down flights of stairs with Anne trapped in a moving elevator is yet another testament to the compelling power of Leong's provocative and lyrical chiller. Ab-

solutely riveting from the moment it opens, THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES weaves a wonderful spell of eerie strangeness suffused with thought-provoking ruminations about the endless search for perfect love and its propensity to destroy if we ever do. Beautifully scripted by Paul Hoffman, and perfectly spiced up by superior performances from Law (GATTA-CA certainly put him on the right track) whose peculiar body contortions convey his animalistic side, and the quite fabulously affecting Lowensohn, Leong never puts a foot wrong with his elegant compositions or stunning use of visual literacy. Timothy Spall puts in an engaging turn too as the police inspector falling under Steven's mysterious charm while investigating him as the possible murder culprit. The unique sight here is Steven violently coughing up crystals of emotion after digesting the blood of his assorted girlfriends and filing each body jewel away under their name and the overwhelming feeling he gets from their multi-faceted residue—Disappointment, Despair, etc. With this audacious twist, Leong and Hoffman add new layers and subtexts to the whole Dracula mythos allowing it to expand even further and give modern subtle shadings to the terms Good and Evil as they peel back layers of cabalistic destruction and heart-breaking obsession. □

FILM RATINGS

- Must see
- Excellent
- Good
- Mediocre
- Fodder for MST-3K

URBAN LEGENDS

Director: Jamie Blanks. Writer: Silvio Horta. TriStar, 9/98. R. With: Jared Leto, Alicia Witt, Rebecca Gayheart, Tara Reid, Natasha Gregson Wagner, John Neville, Robert Englund.

One of the interesting things about urban legends is that, although people believe them, many do not hold up to scrutiny: simply examining the details will reveal that they are wildly improbable or outright impossible. This problem haunts URBAN LEGENDS, which asks us to believe in a serial killer who is modeling murders on such folk tales as the Killer in the Back of the Car. Left dangling are the same questions posed by the stories: how did the killer get back there, and why didn't the driver notice? Compounding this is the script's having the victims act in ways that conveniently set up the legend that the killer then carries out. Is screenwriter Silvio Horta implying some kind of complicity between killer and victim? (No, it's just a lame plot device.) Finally, most urban legends don't end with the death of their lead character—apparently, the movie's killer is not adverse to rewriting popular folklore.

These problems show why the premise is not promising, but then the film isn't really interested in its topic. This is just another post-SCREAM fest desperately in need of a gimmick to distinguish it from its progenitor. The result is a formulaic, cliché-ridden genre piece that never develops any identity of its own, and in fact runs out of urban legends and ultimately resorts to standard stalk-and-slash tactics (including a predictable "twist" ending).

In keeping with the current trend, the killer when finally revealed isn't particularly interesting or frightening, and the motivation for murder is weak: revenge for a fatal prank based on an urban legend. Okay, that explains killing the two people responsible, but what about everyone else? There's a last minute lip-service explanation by the murderer to Natalie (Alicia Witt) about killing "all your friends," but most of the victims were unsympathetic jerks that Natalie never liked anyway—they're just there to pad out the running time with gratuitous slaughter.

There are a few bright spots, including Robert Englund's scene as a professor discussing urban legends, and THE X-FILES' John Neville (as the school principal) gets one or two laughs with lines expressing contempt for students. Director Blanks' work is professional enough, but he seems completely ignorant of his scenario's shortcomings, dishing it all out as though the multiple absurdities haven't destroyed credibility beyond any hope for suspense. And by the way, I've had it with films set in college that are aimed at high school viewers. This idiotic pandering to teen fantasies (all booze and sex with nary a test in sight) is way past insufferable.

● Steve Biodrowski

LASERBLAST: "Videodrome"

By Dennis Fischer

Universal Home Video has at long last released David Cronenberg's seminal reality-bending film *VIDEO-DROME* on disc in a new 1.85 widescreen transfer of the director-approved unrated video version rather than the shortened theatrical version. Cronenberg's edgy film ran afoul of the MPAA, and perversely, after a few cuts were ordered to earn an R-rating, an executive at Universal who did not care for the film ordered a few additional eliminations without Cronenberg's consent or knowledge. Unfortunately, Universal has not included the hitherto unseen footage that ran on A & E's version of the film, restricting special features to a theatrical trailer, some production notes, and short cast and filmmaker bios. The film is available with subtitles and Spanish or French language options as well.

With *VIDEO-DROME*, Cronenberg wanted to experiment with perception. Consequently, the film presents not everyday reality, but rather a new reality as seen by an insane Toronto cable programmer Max Renn (James Woods) who discovers that his morbid attraction to Videodrome, an awful S&M snuff TV show, is being used to warp and manipulate him. It comes on like a Burroughsian interpretation of the ideas of Marshall McLuhan, and though it winds up as something maddeningly ambiguous, the film is full of arresting, surreal imagery and portentous announcements about the "new flesh" that fascinate rather than bore with their incoherence.

Cronenberg explained to William Beard and Piers Handling that he "was trying to make a film that was as complex as the way I experience reality. I think it's very ambiguous... But I wanted it to be like that because to me that's the truth." For most people, *VIDEO-DROME* is a film to be experienced rather than understood. Rick Baker's bizarre makeup effects—including a television made flesh, vaginal stomach openings, a literal "hand gun," and killer cancer that explodes out of right-wing conspirator Barry Convex (Les Carlson)—remain both powerful and memorable. However, this daringly obscure approach also resulted in box office disappointment.

VIDEO-DROME remains one of Cronenberg's most visionary and audacious pictures, a portrait of a psychotic who, submerged as he is in a video controlled world, cannot help but confuse reality with illusion. The sparks generated by Cronenberg's elusive notions ("the video screen is the retina of the mind's eye") are enough to ignite debate about our media-manipulated world for decades to come, and coupled with Woods' riveting performance and Cronenberg's compelling imagery ensure this film's continued classic status. □



Would-be non-conformist Z (voiced by Woody Allen) tries out some new moves on the dance floor in one of the many visually inventive scenes in *ANTZ*.

ANIMATION

ANTZ

Directors: Eric Darnell & Tim Johnson. Writers: Todd Alcott and Chris Weitz. DreamWorks, 10/98, 85 mins. G. Voices: Woody Allen, Sharon Stone, Gene Hackman, Christopher Walken, Sylvester Stallone, Jennifer Lopez, Dan Aykroyd, Jane Curtin.

There's a scene in *ANTZ*, in which the film's neurotic hero, the ant named Z, is thrown into battle. Fighting alongside the ant army, Z faces a battalion of tank-like termites, in a sequence that combines the fantasy and energy of *STARSHIP TROOPERS* with the realism and horror of *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*. As Z survives the acid-spraying terrors of the termites during battle and then later wanders through the strewn bodies in the aftermath, it becomes evident that *ANTZ* is working on a different level for animated films—intent on balancing an innocent fantasy with a darker mood and sarcastic, adult humor.

The film's directors have taken a distinct, cinematic approach with *ANTZ*, rather than just showing off the technology for its own sake (the battle scene and the film's other action centerpieces are as gripping as anything staged in live-action). The character design, while not outstanding (the ants look more alien than insect), works well with the film's solid personality animation. Using the distinct voices of their high-wattage stars, the animators have relayed some ingratiating performances. Coupled with this is a washed-out, muted, earth tone look that never becomes too bleak.

ANTZ is an upbeat film that takes full, comedic advantage of its diminutive world (Z quips about a muscular ant: "He's the size of a pebble!"). As the first of 1998's "animated insect epics," *ANTZ* breaks out of the gate as a well-fashioned and entertaining change from some of the pre-packaged expectations that seem to have become attached to animation.

●●● 1/2 Mike Lyons

DIRECT-TO-VIDEO

PHANTASM IV

Written and Directed by Heidi Marnhout. Orion Home Video, 11/98. 90 mins. R. With: Michael Baldwin, Angus Scrimm, Reggie Bannister, Bill Thornbury.

Despite often cheesy effects and uneven acting, director Don Coscarelli's 1979 cult classic *PHANTASM* may be the best cinematic rendering of a nightmare ever put on film. Sadly, the sequels one and two captured little of the magic of the original, while often heightening its flaws. This disturbing trend continues with this latest entry, a film richly deserving interment in the oblivion of its subtitle.

Fever dream illogic has always been more important than plot in the *PHANTASM* films, but this fourth installment may go too far, offering only a series of random occurrences, interspersed with loads of footage from the first film. Padding a sequel with redundant flashbacks from the original is hardly new, but Coscarelli may be treading new ground by padding this film with footage that was cut from the first film. This recycling of the original's waste—its trash, if you will—may be environmentally admirable but leaves much to be desired dramatically.

All of the original films' core cast return here, but they are given little to do except drive around in cars, look horrified, and desperately try to pull the totally disparate elements on screen into some kind of cohesiveness. Baldwin and Bannister, an effective team in previous entries, spend little time together, and Bannister's adventures before rejoining with Baldwin are totally superfluous. An attempt to explain the series' mysterious antagonist, the Tall Man (Scrimm), proves ill advised at best and downright dumb at worst.

The original *PHANTASM* was in many ways a reworking of 1953's *INVADERS FROM MARS*, albeit filtered through the nightmare imagery of a horror film. Like Menzies' classic,

Coscarelli's tale was told through the eyes of a youthful protagonist, facing the loss of family and identity to an inhuman entity. Most tellingly, *PHANTASM* also mimics *INVADERS* ending, with its young hero trapped in the Mobius loop of a nightmare, that will never end. The parallels are considerable, but the *PHANTASM* sequels give good evidence that Coscarelli copied *INVADERS* unconsciously. If his efforts had been deliberate, he would have duplicated and even refined them in subsequent sequels, instead of just meandering aimlessly as he does here, with no apparent awareness of what his original film's strengths were.

● John Thonen

TOKYO FIST

Director-writer: Shinya Tsukamoto. Manga, 5/98. Approx. 90 mins. Unrated. With: Shinya Tsukamoto, Koji Tsukamoto, Kaori Fujii.

Taking a break from the cyberbolic man-machine interface of the *TETSUO* films, Japanese auteur Shinya Tsukamoto turns in his most accomplished and mature work, one that further develops themes from his previous movies: the brutalization implicit in urban existence and the transmogrification of the flesh in rebellion and defense against the dehumanizing influences of city life. In this case, the horror has its roots in a core of sado-masochism, which is closely tied to the dingy world of pugilistic dementia the movie limns. When Tsuda (Shinya Tsukamoto) confronts Takuji (Koji Tsukamoto), an old classmate turned pro boxer who is putting the make on Tsuda's fiancée Hizaru, the pug demolishes the meek policy peddler. While Tsuda undergoes plastic surgery, Hizaru (Fujii) takes up with Takuji and starts developing a yen for beefcake and body piercing. Once out of the hospital, Tsuda takes up boxing, turning himself into a brutal killing machine, headed for a showdown with his former friend.

Though the movie (basically a three-character piece) is stamped with Tsukamoto's visual trademarks (time-lapse photography, gore, the ever-present sheen of sweaty homo-eroticism), it also comes with a surprising jolt of feminist ire. One of the most fascinating elements is the transformation of Hizaru: when she divests herself of all the metallurgy in the dizzying climactic apotheosis, while Takuji faces his own personal armageddon in the ring, her refutation of and ultimate boredom with all the macho oneupmanship, is a spectacular moment.

What genre fans will probably get off on is the wildly surreal and inventively over-the-top fight grue, which should make anyone think twice before going to the gym. Visually claustrophobic, intense, with better production gloss all around, *TOKYO* is a dazzling rabbit-punch to even the most jaded moviegoer's sensibilities. Tsukamoto also garnishes the end product with adroit black humor: before Tsuda is dismantled by Takuji in their first encounter, Tsukamoto cuts to a picture-puzzle on the wall: our hero's impending physical state. ●●● Todd French

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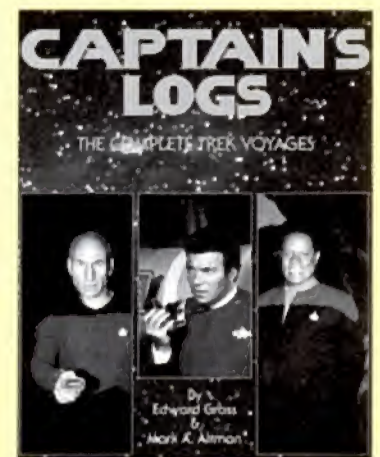
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PRINCE OF EGYPT

continued from page 7

Katzenberg who, after successfully spearheading Disney's animation comeback, didn't want to overburden PRINCE OF EGYPT's production with too many artistic risks.

Gogol remembered that the turning point came with a pre-production trip to Egypt. "When we went there, Jeffrey stood out in front of the Egyptian temple and said, 'Wow, it's even bigger than in Darek's drawings!'"

"It also bonded us as a team," said Altieri of the trip. "I think what it did for us was got us all thinking in the same direction, getting excited over the same kinds of things, which then translates into the finished product." Chavez added, "The way Jeffrey likes to make these films is that he likes to let the production create the world, based on knowledge that's obtainable either through reference books, films or specialists in the field. So, the artists create the world as they idyllically see it.

Then, the payoff is to go to these actual locations and see how true they are."

With its religious topic, many have jokingly dubbed THE PRINCE OF EGYPT, "THE ZION KING," but DreamWorks is taking no chances with the subject matter and has consulted with 360 religious leaders from around the world in an attempt to ward off criticism. Despite its overtones, Gogol insists that PRINCE OF EGYPT will have universal appeal. "The film is not a religious film. The film is about a brothers' relationship and what they're drawn into through the circumstances of their lives." □

WISDOM OF CROCODILES

continued from page 58

horror within him."

In the first draft of Hoffman's screenplay, the central part was written for someone in their forties. "We thought that was too obvious a route," remarked Leong. "Casting Jude Law gave the film a Dorian Gray ambience. He plays

an old soul in a young body very well. Jude also has these incredible eyes, at turn vicious and then soft, and I could paint whatever I wanted in them. The female part was always intended to be non-British, and actress Elina Lowensohn has a very exotic background."

Although shot in London, THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES is meant to be taking place "Anywhere" as Leong explained. "The myth about a man seeking perfect love and destroying it when he finally finds it is not just a western concept, it's a universal one. Therefore you don't see any London buses, taxis, high streets or shops. We could be in Buenos Aires, Tokyo or Paris. Our phrase for the story location on the picture was 'Beyond the Urals' because no one actually knows what is beyond them. I'm Chinese. So is Carolyn. Paul Hoffman is Austro-English. Andy Harris, our production designer, is Scottish. David Lascelles is very British and the cast and crew's multi-national cultures informed the whole

piece in numerous remarkable ways."

Leong said the differences between shooting in Britain as opposed to Asia was, "In Hong Kong, you shoot knockabout fashion with lots of energy and with your characters all over the place. You fill in the gaps at a later date. In London, it's far more craftsman-like. You have to know every single detail up-front and you shoot from a rock-solid script. That bedrock is what we had in THE WISDOM OF THE CROCODILES."

Leong said, "You see, I think this film asks fundamental questions about humanity. Why is it when you fall in love with someone, you are no longer the same person you were? Why do you become someone else? Is it possible to be in love and be independent at the same time? Who is Jude Law at the end of the film? These are the relevant issues raised in a tragic love story where we ask the audience to use their brains along with their imaginations." □

LETTERS

WRITING DS9's "FAR BEYOND THE STARS"

I was gratified to see that "Far Beyond the Stars," the DEEP SPACE NINE episode on which I was the originating writer, made the cover of your excellent magazine. The accompanying piece on the episode was incomplete in its facts, however.

While it's true that the initial story I pitched had Jake, not Ben Sisko, as the main character and a different rationale to explain his being a science fiction writer in the '50s, that was not the end of my participation in the episode, as published comments might suggest.

I had pitched "Far Beyond the Stars" to Hans Beimler a year prior to its purchase. When it was finally bought, I was busy at work as a writer-producer on SLIDERS (chronicled in a recent issue of your magazine). I met with Ira Behr, Hans Beimler, Ron Moore and Rene Echeverria over lunch, and it was a magic time, with all of us jazzed by the notion and throwing in ideas that only made the story better and better. By the end of the meal, the structure of the story as it was eventually filmed was set.

I then went off to write the outline. I started by extensively researching the period and subject matter. I drew upon many sources, including my friendship with the late Theodore Sturgeon, one of the great writers of that era. I also immersed myself in S.F. histories by Bill Glass, Damon Knight, Sam Moskowitz and others, interviewed black professionals about New York in the '50s, even extensively questioned Harlan Ellison about the magazine scene back then, in which he was extensively involved. Beyond this, Harlan told me of a successful '50s author (not in science fiction) who hid behind a white pseudonym until he was "outed" and his career was ruined. (For the record, I based various of the "bullpen" characters on Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore, Robert Heinlein, editors John W. Campbell and H.L. Gold and the blacklisted Dalton Trumbo; I also drew some details of Benny's life from Samuel R. Delany, one of my teachers at the Clarion Writers Workshop).

I wrote the outline over a weekend and I was thrilled with it. The response from those on the show was equally enthusiastic.

Unfortunately, Ira Behr wanted to fast track the episode to air during

February sweeps. The story having been bought in mid-December, this was a very fast schedule. At the time, I was writing two SLIDERS episodes back to back, and the only way I could also have written the DS9 would have been to quit my SLIDERS job—an option I seriously considered. Reluctantly, I had to pass on writing the script for DS9.

Nevertheless, I remained in communication throughout pre-production and during shooting with cast members and creative personnel, gave notes on the script to Hans Beimler and even visited the "Far Beyond the Stars" set (the same day my SLIDERS episode "Slideage" was shooting, in fact).

In the end, I received sole story credit. Ira and Hans did a wonderful script, and the cast and crew were without exception terrific. "Far Beyond the Stars" is one of the high points of my career, and I'm extremely proud of it.

Marc Scott Zicree
Universal City, CA 91608

X-FILES PRO & CON

I just spent \$11.99 on your October issue and feel compelled to voice a concern. For the second consecutive year, *Cinefantastique* has given us a special issue on THE X-FILES, which, despite this billing, contains not one word from Chris Carter, Frank Spotnitz or any other member of the 1013 Productions writing staff. We also are given no comments from David Duchovny or Gillian Anderson. We are given 12 pages of thought-provoking, interesting episode reviews written by a person who clearly no longer likes the show (Paula Vitaris found only five of 20 episodes this season to be "good," none to be "great" and only seven others to reach the low standard of "fair"). Given her total lack of access to Chris Carter and other members of the writing staff (compared to her access to Glen Morgan and James Wong), it's obvious that Chris Carter has reached the same conclusion as I have and decided not to grant her an interview. I believe you are doing me and other fans of the show a disservice by allowing this situation to persist. What hypocrisy it is to use THE X-FILES to sell your magazine and then bash it so relentlessly in your reviews! You are asking fans to pay \$12 for a magazine which leaves me with the feeling that Paula feels cheated by the

show; I feel cheated by the magazine.

Tom Harris
Via E-mail

Thank you for the excellent X-FILES episode guide by Paula Vitaris. Ms. Vitaris never fails to stimulate, inform and entertain in her analysis of the show. Her insight and well-honed reviewing skills put her head and shoulders above all the others in the field, not least because of her obvious affection for the show and the genre. I look forward to next year's critique on Season Six. My congratulations to Ms. Vitaris.

Sarah Stegall
Via E-mail

COHEN ON ARKOFF

Thank you for sending me your October issue of *Cinefantastique* featuring the first part on American International and the interview with Sam Arkoff. I'm surprised the writers didn't get in touch with me, since Herman Cohen Productions is listed in the phone book here in Los Angeles.

Over the years, in his endeavor to promote himself, Mr. Arkoff has given the false impression that he personally made my pictures. I wish to remind him that, thus far, I have produced 32 pictures, but only seven were released by AIP. Further, I wrote the original story of I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF, co-wrote the screenplay with Aben Kandel and produced the picture. My creative contacts at AIP were with the then President James H. Nicholson, and NOT with Sam Arkoff, who was Vice-President & General Counsel at the time.

To respond to Mr. Arkoff's falsehoods about me, I will not lower myself to his own gutter-level language used in this piece. Suffice it to say that he must be suffering from senility since his memory of what happened in the 1950's is obviously failing him. To that effect, I'm enclosing excerpts of Michael Landon's contract with my company.

In the interest of fairness to me and your readers, I would appreciate you publishing this letter in its entirety.

Herman Cohen
Hollywood, CA 90004

CORRECTIONS

We regret that in *Cinefantastique* Vol. 30, No. 9/10, in the articles on DEEP SPACE NINE, Hans Beimler was incorrectly given the title of producer. He has been a supervising producer on the show for

quite some time.

The quote in the box on page 44, attributed to executive producer Ira Steven Behr, should have been attributed to co-executive producer Ronald D. Moore (see page 46.)

The picture on page 64/65 from "Sacrifice of Angels" appears to be upside down.

The quote in the box on page 91, attributed to Brannon Braga, producer, should have been attributed to producer Joe Menosky (see pages 86 and 91). It also should have read, "I never get Seven of Nine mail. It's almost always Janeway." Braga's correct title was co-executive producer.

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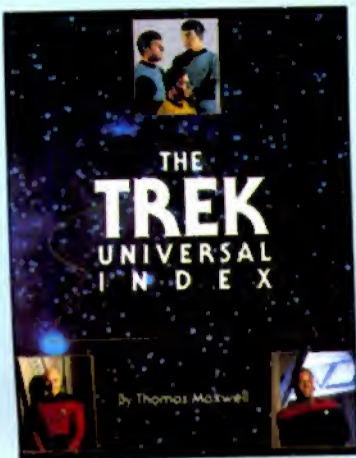
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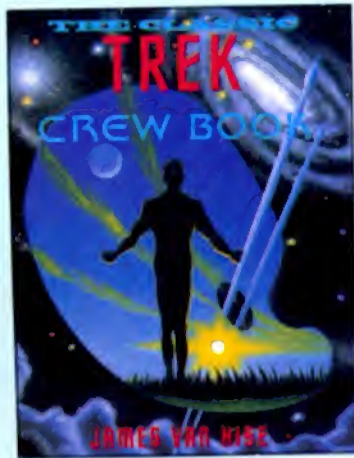
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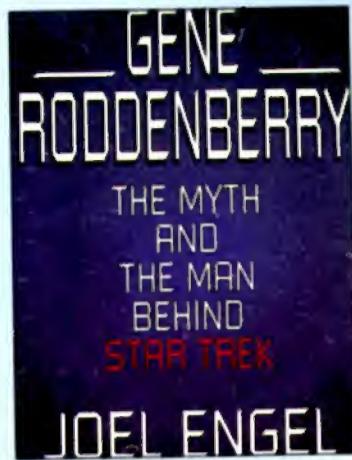
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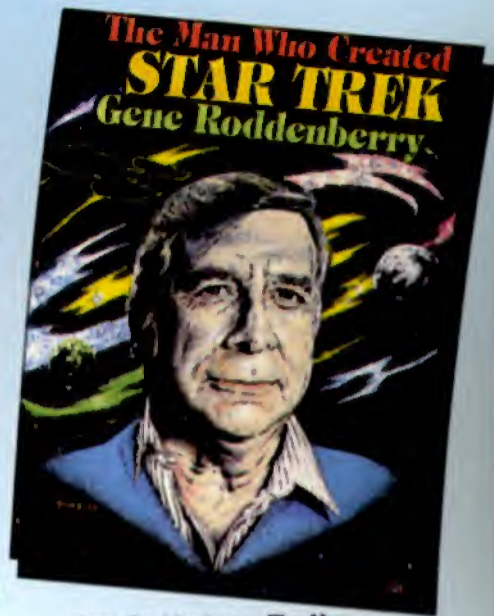
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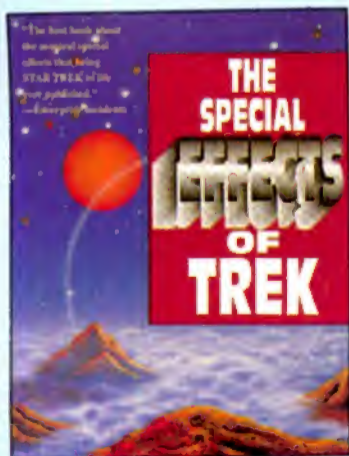
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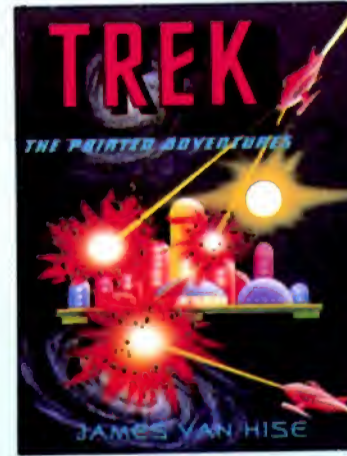
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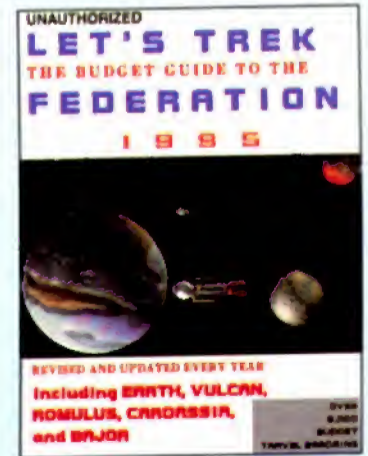
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This double issue devoted to the STAR TREK movie trilogy, follows the course charted by STAR TREK II, III and IV after the disastrous debut of STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE. Writer/director Nicholas Meyer and actor/director Leonard Nimoy are interviewed in depth. Also looks at ILM's effects work in STAR TREK IV. **\$20.00**



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A fond 20th Anniversary salute to the original STAR TREK TV series. Stories on Roddenberry, composer Alexander Courage, and the makeup wizard who created the ears for Spock and a pantheon of other ETs. Also features interviews with the cast and crew, discussing the series in light of the sequels that followed. **\$14.00**



VOL 22 NO 3
The STAR TREK 25TH ANNIVERSARY issue contains a final interview with creator Gene Roddenberry and Harve Bennett on why he parted ways with Roddenberry and the studio. Also Nicholas Meyer on doing his part to repair the faltering frontier. Also available with the commemorative Gene Roddenberry cover. **\$8.00**



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Relive the excitement of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION's fifth season in this special double issue. Included are stories on the show's production, from special effects to makeup to production design, including a fifth-season episode guide annotated with the comments of the writers, producers and actors. **\$20.00**



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We put DEEP SPACE NINE and VOYAGER under the microscope, with articles featuring cast and crew members, makeup, effects, writers, and episode guides for both series. This issue also includes articles on T-2 3D, TRILOGY OF TERROR II, MULTIPLICITY, SPACE JAM and THE X-FILES' David Duchovny. **\$14.00**



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